Semin: Ang: Audom:
Soc: Jes:

THE TREASVRE OF VOWED CHASTITY

Bibl:
L. 5.
160.

in secular Persons.

Also the

WIDDOWES GLASSE.

VVritten by the R R. Fathers Leonard Lessius, and Fuluius Androtius, both of the Society of Iesus.

Translated into English by

I. *W* P.

Permissu Superiorum, 1621.

OF REPRODUCED WITHOUT SPECIFIC P

TO THE HONORABLE AND RIGHT *vertuous Gentlewomã, Mrs. Anne Vaux.*

HONORABLE, AND RIGHT VVORTHY, The constant report of your vertuous life,

life, in the State where-of this little Booke entreateth, hath inuited me to entitle the ſame vnto your Name in particuler, which was written for the profit of all in generall, who haue a true deſire to imbrace the State of vowed Chaſtity, and yet remaine in the world among ſecular perſons.

If the ſubiect ſeeme new, or ſtrange to any, I doubt not, but hauing atten-

attentiuely read, & considered the seuerall passages therein, they will remaine abundantly satisfyed. For it was no part of the Authors intention (who is knowne to be famous, both for learning and piety) thereby to derogate frō other Stats of life; but rather, by shewing the good, & commodity, which may proceed by imbracing of this; those that be more per-

fect in themſelues, might heerby, be the more honoured, and reuerenced of all.

Neither, indeed, is there any thing at al propoſed in this enſewing Diſcourſe, which hath not been practiſed in the Primitiue Church, by perſons of both ſexes; & for that cauſe ſo much admired, and extolled by the auncient Fathers of thoſe dayes: Howſoeuer

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the ſame may ſeeme not to haue beene in ſome later ages, ſo much in vſe, and therefore thought now behoofefull to be again renewed to our memory, in theſe tymes of ſo great neceſſity, for the ſpirituall good of ſoules, and increaſe of Charity, now halfe extinguiſhed in the Chriſtian world.

The profit that may, & doth redound to ſuch

as desire to practise this state of vowed Chastity, remaining in the world, will neither be small, or vncertaine, if the same be imbraced with that sincerity of hart and vertuous manner of life as it ought: wherein I know your selfe to haue made good proofe, these many years, by reaping a plentiful harueſt of the fruits, and heaping vp a masse of Treasure, against the com-

comming of your heauē-
ly Spouſe, to preſent him
withall, to the vnſpea-
keable comfort and con-
ſolation of your ſoules e-
ternall Happynes.

To this little Trea-
tiſe, I haue adioyned the
WIDDOVVES GLASSE,
the which I humbly in-
treate you, to preſent, in
my Name, to your two
moſt worthy Siſters, who
for the long, conſtant, &
moſt exemplar profeſſiō
of

THE EPISTLE

of that noble, and worthy ſtate of chaſt Widdowhood, may ſeeme to clayme a iuſt Title therunto. But I deemed not my labour in tranſlating it, worthy to be preſented to ſo honourable Matrons, in a Dedicatory apart: not doubting but the ſame wilbe more grateful, comming through your handes, who are ſo neere a kin vnto them, both by Nature & Grace;

ſeeing

ſeeing Virginity, and Widdowhood, haue euer been accounted Siſters, and betroathed to the ſame Eternall Spouſe Chriſt Ieſus.

Accept then (Right worthy Gentlewoman) theſe few ſheets of paper, by me tranſlated out of Latin, as a future earneſt of ſom better gift, wherwith I intend to preſent you ere it be long. And in the meane tyme, amongſt

THE EPISTLE

mong the many of your pious and deuout exercises, forget him not, who will euer remaine

Your deuoted seruant,

I. W.

THE

THE GOOD AND COMMODITY

Of the State of life, which some professe, liuing in the world, and vowing Chastity.

THERE be not wãting in these our daies, amongst secular persõs very many, as well Widdowes, as

Virgins, who aspyring to perfection, haue a desire (as farre as they may conueniently) to sequester themselues from the troubles and incombrãces of the world, thereby to imploy their mindes more freely and securly in the seruice of God.

For whome notwithstanding, to liue in Monasteryes, either it is not so cõuenient, or els (grounded vpon sufficiẽt reasons) they may be otherwise resolued. For the wayes & manners of seruing God are diuers, & those who cannot aspire

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to the higheſt & moſt perfect, are not therefore conſtrayned to content themſelues with the meaneſt & leaſt noble.

Wherfore many there be who liuing in the world, reiecting the vanity of rich and coſtly apparell, and taking a plaine & ſimple habit, conſecrate their Virginity to Almighty God; and auoyding the conuerſation of ſecular perſons (as much as they may) do imploy thẽſelues wholy in the offices of Charity and Deuotion.

Yet neuertheleſſe, be-

cause there be not wanting som, who (I know not out of what zeale) carpe at the Institution of such manner of life, I am for this respect wonne, at the intreaty of a special friend, to declare out of holy Scripture, and ancient Fathers, in what degree such kind of life in the Catholike Church is to be esteemed: for the satisfaction of whom in a matter of such importance, and so much pertayning to the good of soules, I haue purposed to handle it in eight little Chapters following, where

where, in the firſt, it is proued out of holy Scripture, that this kind of life is pious and laudable.

In the ſecond, the ſame is proued by Exáples out of holy Scripture, and Eccleſiaſticall hiſtoryes.

In the third, the ſame is conuinced by the Authorityes of holy Fathers.

In the fourth, the ſame is confirmed by Theologicall Arguments.

In the fifth, the ſame is alſo confirmed out of the good & commodity which enſue of Chaſtity.

The sixt, contayneth a solution to certaine obiections made, concerning the merits of Marriage & Chastity.

The seauenth, setteth downe certaine admonitions & aduices, to be exactly followed in this estate.

The eight, sheweth that this manner of life, is truly and properly called an Estate.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Wherin it is proued out of Scripture, that, that kind of life, wherin ſome, Men or Vomẽ, liuing in the world, leauing of coſtly apparrell, & vſing plain and modeſt attire, doe vow Chaſtity, is laudable and meritorious before God.

THERE be many in this age who vſing ouer much the liberty of their owne Iudgments, diſallow of this kind of life: yet by what reaſons, or vpon what grounds they are moued ſo to do, beſids thoſe

which *Iouinian* the ancient heretike (& theſe alſo of his coate euen in theſe tymes) hath alleadged, I cannot imagine. Neither do I think they haue any other, vnles perhaps they conſider the difficulties which this māner of life is ſubiect vnto, & are terrifyed with more dangers of liuing chaſt in this, then in the ſtate of religion. For which cauſe they may thinke it more ſecure to vow Chaſtity in the one, then in the other. But neuertheleſſe it is to be held as a point of faith, that this State

State is not only lawful, but alſo commendable, and of great merit before Almighty God; and the ſame practiſed not only of men, and women, but alſo of youth it ſelfe.

This is euidently conuinced out of holy Scriptur, wher our Lord himſelf (*Matth.* 9.) doth openly cõmend this Inſtitution. For firſt when the Apoſtls hearing the ſpeaches of our Bleſſed Sauiour cõcerning Marriage, anſwered, *Si ita eſt &c.* If ſuch be the condition of man, linked vnto a

wife

wife (to wit, that it is lawfull to haue but one, neither to be soseparated from that one, that whiles she liues he may take another) it is better not to marry, & incurre such a seruitude. To whom our Lord replyed, approuing that which they had sayd: *Non omnes capiunt &c.* al apprehēd not this speach but only such to whome it is giuen: for there be those who haue made themselues Eunuches for the kingdom of heauen &c. He who can vnderstand this, let him vnderstand it.

Heere

Heere our Lord spake of single life in generall, commending the same also in those who liue in the world; first, when approuing the answere of his aforesayd Apostles (who then thought not of liuing in Monasteryes, or being Religious) he sayd: *Non omnes capiunt &c.* All apprehend not this word; as though he should haue sayd, you rightly infer, that it is not conuenient to marry, but few there be who vnderstand a thing of so great, & high a Mystery.

Second-

Secondly, when distinguishing three sorts of Eunuches, he sheweth, that those do greatly please him, who haue made themselues Eunuches, that is to say, who haue exempted themselues from Marriage, for the Kingdome of heauen: To wit, that being thereby made more free, from the burthen of such a clogge, they may runne the faster vnto it, and enioy it more safely and aboundantly.

Thirdly when he saith, He that can vnderstād this mystery, let him vnderstād it

it: as if he ſhould haue ſaid, I cõſtraine no man, but exhort al, for it is a great benefit to abſtaine from mariage for the kingdome of God. Therefore he who hath ſo great a courage, that he hopeth he ſhalbe able to aprehend & imbrace ſo great a good, let him not neglect it.

Wherefore ſince our Lord did not only cõmend this ſtate in generall, but alſo in particuler according to which the apoſtles vnderſtood him, & which might haue been practized at that tyme; it followeth manife-

stly, that the same is commendable, and most acceptable vnto God, being practised also by those that liue in the world.

Neither can it be said, that our Lord spake not of the vow of Chastity, but onely of the simple purpose and vse therof: for to be made an Eunuch, is not only to abstaine from Mariage, but also to bereaue ones selfe of al ability therof, and of all other carnall pleasure; which is done in effect also, by the vow of Chastity. For euen as the

corporall

corporall making one an Eunuch, cuts off all ſufficiency of carnall act, or delight: So likewiſe the ſpirituall making one an Eunuch, which is effected by the vow of chaſtity, diſinables all morall faculty ſo farre, that we may not vſe any ſuch delight lawfully, making it morally impoſſible (as it is incompatible with Iuſtice) to do it. For what we cannot lawfully do, may be abſolutely ſaid, that we cannot do, and is ſaid to be (iuſtly) impoſſible.

From whence it is, that holy

holy Fathers vsually out of this place of Scripture proue the vow of Chastity, because a spirituall making one an Eunuch, cannot be otherwise effected, then by vow. See *S. Augustine* in his booke of holy Virginity, *cap.* 30. *S. Hierom* in his book against *Iouinian*, and vpon this place of S. Matthew *cap.* 19. The same is cleerly proued out of the Apostle 1. *Corinth.* 7. where he greatly prayseth singlenes of life, professed in diuers manners of estate, and obserued also in the world, and in priuat

howses, for as then Monasteryes were not yet begun. *Dico innuptis &c.* I speak both to the vnmaried, & to Widdowes, that it is good for thē to remain in that estate, as I haue also done. And againe: *I would haue al be as I my selfe*, that is, I desire that all should be continēt, as it wil appeare out of that which follows. *De Virginibus &c.* As for those that are virgins, I haue no expresse commission to them from our Lord, but I giue them Counsell (to wit, that they remain in their Virginity) as hauing

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obteyned mercy of Almighty God, to be faithfull, &c. And againe, *Si nupserit virgo &c*: If a virgin marry, she sinneth not, but such notwithstanding shal haue the tribulation of the flesh, that is to say, many troubls cares, and afflictions &c. Againe: *Igitur qui &c*. Therfore he which giueth a virgin in mariage, doth well, but he which doth it not, doth better. Also, *Beatior erit &c*. she shalbe more happy if she remaine so still (to wit vnmarried) according vnto my aduice, for I think that

that euen I my ſelfe, haue the ſpirit of God. In al theſe places the Apoſtle comends the loue of Chaſtity, and Virginity, cuẽ in the world and in priuate howſes, as it was obſerued at that tyme.

For in Ancient tymes, when the faithfull were moſt deuout, many followed the aduice of our Sauiour, in ſuch manner, as they had then oportunity to do it, as is manifeſt out of the Acts of the Apoſtles; where many hauing ſould their goods & beſtowed the money in common, imbraced

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pouerty. It is very probable therfore, that there were a greater nũber of those who imbraced Chastity, then others, both becauſe that vertue was more noble and profitable, and alſo becauſe there might be many poore folks which had not goods and poſſeſſions to ſell, or if they had, yet perhaps could not ſell them; all which notwithſtanding might profeſſe Chaſtity.

Neither is it to be doubted, but that many obliged themſelues by vow thereunto, ſince they imbraced it

out

out of a deſire of perfection and zeale to pleaſe Almighty God. And it is more perfect a great deale to keep it with an entire reſolutiō, then only with an vncertaine and mutable purpoſe.

Finally alſo, becauſe they imbraced it out of the motiue of our Sauiours owne aduiſe and commendation therof; and that which our Sauiour cōmended was the voluntary making of themſelues Eunuches, which is effected by vow, as hath bin ſaid before. The ſame is collected alſo out of the Apoſtle

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postle 1. *Tim.* 5. *Adolescentiores viduas &c.* Take none of the younger sort of widowes, &c. which is meant that they should not be admitted into the function or ministery of *diaconisses*, or into the number of the *Alumnæ* or *Pupills* of the Church. *Cùm enim &c.* for that, saith *S. Paul*, after they haue liued licentiously in Christ, at last also they will not sticke to marry, frustrating their former Faith: that is, they will breake the vow of Chastity which they had made before; for the word *Fayth*, is taken

taken in this place for *Promiſe*, or obligation dew by promiſe: as for example, to *giue* ones *Faith*, is to giue ones promiſe, to *keepe fayth*, is to keepe promiſe, to *fruſtrate fayth* giuen before, is to breake promiſe, and a promiſe made to God, is a vow.

From hence it is manifeſt, that it was a cuſtom in the primitiue Church, for Widdowes alſo to vow Chaſtity, ſo that without a mortall ſin, & being guilty of damnation, they could not marry againe: beſides that

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that, euery act of Concupiscence, yea and the very marriage it self was iniury against Christ; for so much is signified in these words, *After they haue liued licentiously in Christ*, that is to say, after they haue liued lasciuiously and luxuriously, wroning our Sauiour Christ, to whome they had bound themselues by vow, and were become espowsed to him, at length also they will not sticke to marry. After this manner the Coūcell of *Carthage* the 104. *Canon*, and S. *Chrysostome* vpon this

this place, and *S. Hierome* in his epiſtle to *Herontia de Monogamia*, and others, do expound it.

This place is to be noted & pondered of all ſuch as haue made vow to Almighty God of perpetuall Chaſtity, for that without being guilty of eternall dānation, they can neither marry (eſpecially with an intention to conſummate) nor otherwiſe enioy carnal delight, which alſo is the opinion of all the Fathers, who interprete this place to be of promiſe made vnto

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God by the vow of Chastity.

Finally whersoeuer holy Scripture commendeth Virginity, it speaketh in generall; neither is it to be restrained vnto those alone, who liue in Monasteryes. And all rewards and priuiledges of Virginity there rehearsed, belong vnto all holy Virgins, as in the 3. *chap.* of the Booke of *Wisedome*: *Felix est sterilis &c.* happy is she that is barren and vndefiled, which neuer knew any impure bed, she shall haue fruite in the behoul-

houlding of ſoules that are bleſſed &c. *Apoc.* 14. It is granted only vnto Virgins (*ſequi Agnum quocumq; ierit*), to follow the Lambe whereſoeuer he goeth, and to ſing that new Hymne in *Iſay* 56. To Eunuches which keep Gods diuine Commandements, is promiſed an euerlaſting name, and a high place, and a degree in the Citty of Almighty God.

Some will obiect that, that place of the Apoſtle 1. *Tim.* 5. ſaying: *Volo iuniores nubere &c.* I would haue the younger ſort to marry, to

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bring forth Children and keep house &c. makes cleare against that which we haue sayd. To this I answere, that it is not to be vnderstood of all Widdowes that are young, but only of those which cannot liue continent, and are not otherwise obliged by any vow: for it is better that such should marry, then liue incontinent, and giue scandall to the vnfaythfull, as the Apostle insinuateth in the same place.

Also the holy Father S. *Chrysostome* in his 15. *Homily* vpon

vpon the 1. to Timothy, affirmeth, that the Apoſtle ſpeaketh there of ſuch widows, who being freed from the yoake and gouernement of their husbands, liue diſſolutly, become idle, pratlers, wanton, curious, running vp and down to their neighbours houſes, & the like. And it is manifeſt out of the text it ſelfe that the Apoſtle ſpeaketh of ſuch, when he ſayth: *Volo &c.* I would haue the younger ſort to marry. *S. Ambroſe* alſo in his booke of *VViddowes* explicateth *S. Paul. Pro remedio ſuaſit nuptias*

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&c. he perſwaded Marriage as a remedy, but not preſcribed it as a choice. S. *Hierome* in his 8. Epiſtle to *Saluina*, asking: *Cur nuptias Paulus indulſerit &c.* Why did S. *Paul* tauour Marriage? Preſently he addeth: *Iam quadam &c.* Some haue already declined after Sathã: whereby we may vnderſtand, ſayth S. *Hierome*, that theſe ſpeaches rather ſignify a helping hand to be lent to thoſe that are fallen, then the reward of a crowne to thoſe which ſtand firme: See then (ſayth he) what

theſe

these second Marriages be, which are yet to be preferred before the condition of a Brothell-house: for some have declined after Sathan; therefore a young Widdow which cannot, or will not containe her selfe, let her rather take a husband then the diuel. So *S. Hierome* Out of which it appeares that it is not conuenient for all young Widdowes to marry, but onely such who are subiect to the vices aboue named, to wit, in whome there is manifest danger of Incontinency, or

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which cannot liue chast, or will not vse meanes to do it.

CHAP. II.

The same is proued by examples out of holy Scripture, and the custome of the Church, most frequently practised from the first beginning of Religion, euen vnto these dayes.

FIRST of all, doth here present her selfe our blessed Lady, as guide and Author of this Institution, who liuing in the world at her owne command, and free from being subiect to any

any other, reseruing also her proper goods, vowed vnto God perpetuall virginity, & this either before, or immediatly after her Marriage.

And truly, if before her marriage (as it is most likely she did, and S. *Augustin* in his Book of holy virginity *cap.* 4. doth thinke most probable) then she contracted not marriage afterwards of her owne accord, but rather moued thereunto by diuine Reuelatiõ, by which also she was assured that there should be no danger

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to looſe her virginity, and that her huſbād alſo ſhould binde himſelfe by the like vow of Chaſtity; wherfore ſhe neuer conſented neither expreſly, nor in effect to any matrimoniall Act. For albeit that in the contract of Marriage, there is power giuen to the husband ouer his wiues body, yet by this reuelation ſhe was aſſured that it ſhould in her neuer actually take effect. And as ſhe for her part had choſen to preuent it, ſo likewiſe her husband ſhould prelētly do the like.

But

But if ſhe made her vow after Marriage, it is to be ſayd that ſhe contracted Marriage, not with an abſolute conſent to conſumat the ſame, but in ſuch manner as ſhe referred her ſelfe wholy to the prouidence of Almighty God, relying altogeather vpon his diuin will and pleaſure. Moreouer it is moſt manifeſtly probable that our Bleſſed Lady had vowed Chaſtity, out of theſe wordes of S. *Luke*: *Quomodo fiet iſtud &c.* How ſhal this com to paſſe, ſince I know not man? that

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is to say, how shall I conceiue a Sonne, that cannot know Man, because I am boūd by my vow of Virginity? for so the holy Fathers *Athanasius, serm. de sanctissima Deipara, Gregory Nissen* in his Oration on the birth of our Sauiour, *S. Augustine* in his booke of holy *Virginity cap.* 4. *S. Bernard* in his fourth sermon *super missus est &c.* do teach; and reason it selfe doth likewise manifestly conuince. For otherwise her obiection to the Angell had beene to no purpose, since it might haue beene answe-

anſwered vnto her, Now thou ſhalt know man, and conceaue. Therefore her obiection, *I know not man*, is the ſame, *that I cannot know man*: euen as he who hath vowed to abſtaine from fleſh or wine, being inuited ſayth: *I eate not fleſh, I drinke not wine, I frequent not banquets &c.*

An innumerable multitude of Virgins preſently followed the example of our B. Lady, in ſo much that one howſe, to wit of *Philip the deacõ*, had 4. daughters remayning virgins, as

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it is manifest out of the Acts of the Apostles *Chap.* 21. who also were indued with the spirit of Prophecy, as it is there said: which as S. *Hierome* witnesseth in his Epistle to *Demetriades*, was granted them as a reward of their Virginity.

S. Philip the Apostle before his Apostleship, brought vp three daughters also, wherof two remayned virgins till they were very old as *Policrates* in *S. Hierome* reporteth *De Scrip. Eccleſiaſt.* in *Polycrate*.

S. Petronilla daughter *S. Peter* vowed

vowed virginity, and for feare of looſing it, obteyned ſoden death from Almighty God.

S. *Tecla* at the perſwaſion of *S. Paul*, imbraced the ſame, as *S. Ambroſe* witneſſeth in his ſecond booke of Virgins.

S. Iphigenia daughter to the King of *Ethiopia*, by the counſell of *S. Matthew*, as *Abdias* writeth in her life.

Flauia Domitilla daughter to *Clemens* the Conſull, & S. *Peters* hoſt at Rome, at the perſwaſion of *S. Clemẽt*, as S. *Bede* witneſſeth in his

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Martyrologe the 7. of May, or as it is set downe in his life, at the perswasion of *Nereus* and *Achilleus*.

S. Valeria at the perswasõ of *S. Martialis*, as appeareth out of his Epistle *ad Tholosanos*, Chap. 8.

S. Pudentiana & her sister *Praxedes*, by the Counsell of the Apostles, or Apostolicall men.

Finally *S. Anatolia, Apollonia, Balbina, Barbara, Pelagia, Catherina, Cecilia, Agatha, Agnes, Lucia, Basilla, Christina, Dorothea, Emerentiana, Prisca, Euphemia, Saturnina, Susanna, Victo-*

Victoria, *Theodora*, and innumerable others contynued virgins, in the world, euen to their death, and honoured their virginity with the crowne of Martyrdome.

Moreouer it is manifest out of *S. Cyprian*, *S. Ambrose* & *S. Hierome* with other holy Fathers, that there were in those ages infinite who cõsecrated their virginity to Almighty God, although they entred not into Monasteries, but dwelt either in their Parents howses, or in their owne, retayning the vse of their proper

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goods, or els liued many together in comon.

The same appeareth also out of the testimony of *Faustus Manichæus* in *S. Augustine*, in his 30. boke against *Faustus* the 4. *Chap.* where *Faustus* thus obiecteth. *Nec videtis hinc &c.* Neither do you see heere, both your virgins to be noted of being deceaued by the doctrine of the Diuell, and your selues to become his Prelats, who contentiously alwayes incite them to this profession, by your perswasions, that there is almost now in your Chur-

Churches a greater number of Virgins, then of marryed women.

By which ſpeach two things are to be noted, that Biſhops & Prelates, euery where through the whole world, did earneſtly incite thoſe that were vnder their charge to the profeſſion of Virginity, and that the nũber of thoſe who did publikely profeſſe Virginity, was as great as thoſe that were marryed. See *S. Ambroſe* in his 30. booke of Virgins, where he ſheweth the ſame moſt euidently.

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Among these also many were very eminent and wealthy, as the daughters of Senatours, and Princes, and many of them had wayting women to follow them when they went abroad, as it appeares out of S. *Hierome* in his 8. Epistle to *Demetriades*, where he also warneth such Mistresses, that, as they themselues go modestly in their apparell, so they should cause their women of attendãce also to auoyd vanity in their attyres, & see that their habits were modest and graue.

Be-

Beſides many Fathers haue written of the attyre, and diſcipline of Virgins, as *Tertullian*, *S. Cyprian*, *S. Ambroſe*, *S. Hierome*, in diuers places of their workes. All which they directed ſpecially vnto ſuch, as liuing out of Monaſteryes at their owne gouernment, imbraced virginity. And the ſaid holy Fathers do warne thē that they ſhould not be ſeen in publique without veils, and ciuilly accompanyed; that they ſhould not vſe ſecular ornaments; that they ſhould abſtaine from painting

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ting, and vanity in their cloathes; that they should auoyde vnprofitable meetings, marryages and banquets; that they should giue their almes with a pure intention to the relieſe of orphans, and ſuch as were in diſtreſſe. All which things it is manifeſt do belong to ſuch as are at their owne diſpoſing, and retaine their proper ſubſtance.

Neither haue we only examples of Chaſtity in ſingle or vnmarryed folkes, but alſo euen in thoſe theſelues which are marryed, which

which to auoyd tediouſnes I omit. *See Marulus in his 4. booke the 7. and 8. chap. Fulgoſus in the 4. chap. Ignat. in his 6. Booke.* Out of which it appeares euidently, that this inſtitution of imbracing & profeſſing Chaſtity, in the world, hath beene moſt frequent and vſuall, euer ſince the beginning of the Church, and therefore very commendable and meritorious.

CHAP.

Leſſius, L.

CHAP. III.

The same is witnessed by the testimonyes of holy Fathers.

MERVAILOVS are the commendations which holy Fathers giue to this state of life, which are no lesse referred to such as obserue it in the world, then to those which professe it in Monasteryes. S. *Ignatius* in his epistle *ad Tharsenses* calleth *Virgins* (so vowed vnto God) *the Priests of Christ*, because they offer their bodyes to God as a sacrifice, *Eas quæ in virginitate degunt*

degunt &c. Account, saith he, those who liue in the state of Virginity, as Priests of Christ.

S. Athanasius in his little worke of virginity, about the end, sayth: *Magna virtus continentia &c.* Continency is a great vertue, purity is a thing worthy to be boasted of, great are the prayses of Virgins. O Virginity, treasure inconsumable, garland neuer to be withered, temple of Almighty God, house of the holy Ghost, Margarite most pretious, ouercõmer of death & hell,

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life of Angels, crowne of Saints &c. S. Cyprian in his booke of the *habit and discipline of Virgins*: *Nunc nobis ad Virgines sermo est &c.* Now speake we of Virgins, sayth he, of whom by how much their glory is the more eminent, by so much their care is the greater. This is the flower of ecclesiastical bud, the ornament and grace of spirituall grace it selfe, the hopeful towardnes of praise and honour, a worke entire and vncorrupted, the image of God correspondēt to the sanctimony of our

Lord

Lord, the more beautifull part of Christ his flock &c. And afterwards: *Si præmium pollicitationis &c.* If thou expect the reward of promise, thou wilt count thy labour little: Immortality shall be giuen to him, that persenereth; perpetuall life is proposed a reward; our Lord promiseth a kingdome: preserue yee Virgins, preserue that which you haue begun to be, preserue that which yee shall be, for great is the reward prouided for you &c.

That which wee must

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be hereafter, you haue begun to be already; yee possesse in present the glory of the Resurrection in the age to come; yee passe through the tymes without taking infectiō from them as long as yee persuere in Chastity and Virginity; yee are equall euen to the Angells of God, solide and vntoucht; Virginity only endures, onely lasteth for euer.

The first Precept (*S. Cypriā* goeth still on) of Almighty God, commaunded to increase and generate; the second perswaded Contynency

nency. Whilſt the world was rude & vnpeopled, by our fertility, by generation we were multiplyed, & grewe to the increaſe of mankind: but now when the world is peopled and filled, thoſe who are capable of Chaſtity are made Eunuches ſpiritually, after the manner of things that are made vſeleſſe to the Sex, for the kingdome of God. Hitherto S. *Cyprian*.

S Baſill in his booke of true Virginity ſaith: Virginity is certainly a great and excellent thing, which ma-

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keth a man incorruptible like vnto God himselfe; but it passeth not from our bodyes into our soules; yet being the propriety of an incorporeall nature, keeps also our bodyes incorrupt with a pretious integrity &c. Virgins haue before hand indewed themselues with that which by deuine vertue, must be perfected in vs at the Resurrection; for liuing heere like vnto Angells, they neither marry, nor are marryed, but are both in vertue of minde, & integrity of body, equall vnto

vnto Angells. The ſame Father explicating alſo the words of the Prophet *Eſay* 56. of Eunuches, he wryteth in this manner. *Pro humano nomine &c.* Inſteed of a humane name, ſayth our Lord, I will giue them a name of Angells which are immortall, that they may haue heauen and the faireſt part therof to remaine in, and that dwelling in the moſt beautiful ſeate of heauen, that is to ſay, in my houſe, within the incloſure thereof, they may receaue not only the nature of the

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Angells, and the honour of perpetuall succession, being sufficient of themselues to continue an eternall succession of their kind, in themselues, for life euerlasting; but also that they may haue a principall place amongst Angells, and a name indeleble, which for the great splendour in their beauty shall neuer decay &c.

S. Gregory Nazianzen in his Verses in the prayse of Virginity singeth thus: *Salue Virginitas &c.*

Haile Chastity the guift of only Heauen,

Parent

Parent of a pure liſe, by whom are giuen
Our greateſt goods, part euen of Chriſt, and one
Thats to celeſtiall ſpirits companion:
Nor euer knew of vnchaſt bed the touch,
For God himſelſe and his faire Quire are ſuch.

S. *Iohn Chryſoſtome* in his booke of Virginity the *cap.* 2. ſayth: Virginity ſo much excells marriage, by how much heauen doth earth, and Angells mortall men. And againe in the 12. *chap.* Humanity ſince it is infe-

riour

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riour to those happy spirits the Angells, as farre as it is able, striueth to attaine vnto their perfection. And how? Angells marry not, nor take to them wiues, no more doth a Virgin. Angels wayting alwayes about the throne of Almighty God, do serue him: so doth a Virgin. Wherefore S. *Paul* calls them away from all cares, that they may continually imploy themselues in the seruice of God, without hauing wherewithall to be distracted. Againe, *chap.* 37. Dare any one after

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all this compare marriage with virginity, or but once bring the one in presence of the other? S. *Paul* suffereth not this, who interposeth a great distance betweene these two, where he sayth: the one thinketh on matters belonging vnto God, the other on matters belonging to the world.

S. Ambrose in his first booke of virgins saith, *Nec immerito &c.* deseruely hath virginity deriued from heauen the manner of her life, since it is in heauē that her Spouse hath his dwelling place.

This

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This clowde passing thorough the Ayre, Skyes, & Quires of Angells themselues, hath found out the word of God, euen in the bosome of God the Father, and hath filled its bowells therwith. For who is it, that hauing found so great a good, will leaue it? For thy Name is an oyntment powred out, wherfore yong virgins, and maides haue loued thee, and taken thee vnto them. Finally, that is not my saying. Because those which neither are nor wilbe marryed, shall be

be as the Angells of God in heauen.

Let none therfore meruaile (ſaith S. *Ambroſe* further) that they are cõpared to the Angells of God who are lincked and vnited in the God of Angells &c. Let vs compare therfore the cõtents of marryed women, with the loweſt and leaſt happines of Virgins.

Admit (ſaith he further) that ſome great woman ſhould boaſt of her fertility & the fruit which ſhe hath brought forth: by how many the more Children

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she hath beene deliuered of, by so much the greater haue beene the panges & paynes which she endured. Let her reckon the ioy which she hath of her children, and withall she may count likewise the troubles which they haue caused her. She marryeth and weepeth: & what wise vowes are these, which so sodenly must be repented &c.

Againe. Yow haue heard all yee that are mothers, in what vertues, in what order, and discipline, yee ought to bring vp your chil-

childrē, that you may haue ſome of your owne, by whoſe merites your owne ſins & offences may be forgiuen. A Virgin is one to whom God hath giuen her to be ſo, and therefore ſhe is his guift, ſhe is the reward of her Parents &c. A virgin is the oblation of her Mother, by whoſe dayly ſacrifice Gods diuine power is appeaſed.

S. *Hierome* in his firſt book againſt *Iouinian cap.* 1. *Ideoplus amat &c.* Therefore our Sauiour Chriſt loueth Virgins the more, becauſe

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of their owne accord they giue him that, which was not exacted of them: and it is a token of greater grace to offer that which is not due, then to giue that which they are compelled vnto.

And afterward: *Grandis fidei est &c.* It is a worke of great fayth, and much vertue, when the Temple of God is most pure to offer it entierly as a burnt-sacrifice vnto our Lord, and according to the Apostle to be holy, aswell in body as in spirit.

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S. Auguſtine in his booke of holy Virginity *cap.* 13. ſayth: Virginall integrity is an Angelicall portion and a perpetuall meditation of incorruptibility in a corruptible body. Let all fertility of body giue place vnto this, and all continency of marryed perſons yeild vnto it; for the former is not in our owne power, the later liueth not in eternity. The liberty of our will extendeth not vnto bodily fruitfullneſſe, Matrimoniall Chaſtity is not found in Heauen.

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They certainely shall haue some reward aboue all others in that generall immortality, who haue already growne in their flesh somwhat that is not fleshly. Wherefore they are much ouerseene, who thinke the good & commodity of this continency not to be necessary, for the kingdome of heauen, but onely for the present world wherein we liue.

In which last wordes he conuinceth *Iouinia* & the heretiks of our tymes, who with him teach, that Virginity

ginity is only conuenient to auoyd worldly troubles.

S. Fulgentius in his 2. Epistle to *Proba cap. 9. Dicimus à sanctis nuptijs &c.* We affirme (wheras those marry who cannot liue continent) that holy Virginity as farre excelleth holy Matrimony, as that which is better excelleth that which is good, that with is high excelleth that which is low, that which is heauenly excelleth earthly, that which is holy, more holy, mortall marriage, marriage immortall, the flesh the spi-

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rit, weakenes strength, the fruit of a trāsitory issue the fruite of a braunch euerlasting, tribulation security, vnsetlednes of mind tranquillity, a good which is momentary and ful of troubles excelleth that which is better, and accompanyed with ioy euerlasting.

These & many other thinges, holy Fathers haue written in the cōmendatiō of virginity, by which the excellency & worth therof may be beeter knowen and esteemed, no one vertue or estate of life being commē-

ded with so great affection, & consent of holy Fathers, as this.

Hereupon, especially in former ages, an infinite multitude haue imbraced it, in so much that *S. Ambrose* in his 3. booke of Virgins affirmeth, That in the Easterne & Africá Churches, there were more virgins consecrated to Almighty God, then wee haue men borne in our parts heere. And yet notwithstanding mákind is not therby diminished, but increased. If any one (quoth he) imagineth

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neth, that the number of mankind is diminished by the multitude of virgins, let him consider, that where there are few virgins there are also the fewer persons, and where the number of them is more frequent who are louers and imbracers of Virginity, there also the number of men is more great. Consider how many *Alexandria*, & all the Easterne parts, with the Churches also of Affrica, was wont euery yeare to consecrate: fewer men are heere begotten then there virgins consecra-

secrated; the reason wherof is, that God will not be ouercome with liberality: but if the Parents offer him a Child or two, he renders them eight or ten, graunting fruitefullnes, and fortunate Childe-bearing to such as are mothers, and filling their howses with his blessing. Therfore euen as faithfull paying of Tythes, & liberality towards the poore, bringeth not pouerty, since God by his prouidence prospereth and increaseth our substance, & maketh our fields the more fruite-

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fruitfull, as S. *Hierome* teacheth *Serm.* 219. *de tempore*; so the loue and affection to virginity hindreth not the world, nor wasteth the number of secular Persons, but obteyneth it a longer benediction.

CHAP. IIII.

The same is proued also, by reason.

THE errour of *Iouinian* was, that Virginity did not excell Marriage, which he meant by virginity, taken absolutely and generally, whether it were pro-

profeſſed by perſons liuing in the world or in Religiõ. He therefore who confeſſeth that virginity profeſſed in the ſtate of Religion, is to be preferred before Marriage, but not that which is imbraced in the world, is at leaſt halfe a Iouinianiſt, becauſe he is halfe of his opinion; nay rather he ſeemes to be altogeather of the ſame minde, and really a Iouinianiſt, becauſe he denieth, that Virginity is of it own nature better thẽ Marryage, wherein the whole Errour of Iouinian

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about this matter consisted. For if of it owne proper nature it were better, it would followe, that the same being also professed in the world, would be better. See *S. Augustine Cap. 28. ad Quod-vult-Deum*, and *S. Ierome* in his 10. booke against the same *Iouinian &c.*

If it were not laudable and meritorious to vow Virginity, liuing in the world, either it should be for the great difficulty and morall impossibility of keeping their vow in that estate, or els because Chasti-

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ty is not better then marriag; for no other reaſon can be imagined. Not the former, for it is an hereſy of the heretikes of theſe our daies, who for the difficulty therof, affirme, that ſuch a vow is not to be made, vnleſſe the perſon know that he is peculiarly inſpired with the guift of continency. Not the latter, for it is the errour of *Iouinian* aforeſaid. Cõcerning the gift of Chaſtity, it is to be held as a point of faith, that this gift will not be wanting to any who will reſolue to

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liue chaſte, if he do as much as lyeth in him to obteine the ſame of Almighty God.

If there be ſo great difficulty to liue chaſte in the world, in ſo much that it is not meritorious for a man to bind himſelf therto by vow; then ſuch a vow is of it owne nature vayne, & of no effect to him that makes it, and ſo he may freely breake that which is of ſuch difficulty, as ſeemes morally impoſſible. But this kind of reaſoning may by no meanes be admitted; to wit, that ſuch a vow is

of

of it owne nature vaine & of no effect, and that it may be broken without a moſt grieuous ſin. See the aboue métioned teſtimony of the Apoſtle 1. *Tim.* 5.

It is very commendable & meritorious for yong men alſo remayning in the world to vow chaſtity, yea the Church bindeth al ſuch as haue taken holy Orders therunto. Therfore if men do it, & that it be commendable in them to do ſo; why ſhould it not be the like for women, ſuch as are yonge, both Maydes, & Widdows

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especially, since men liue in far greater danger by means of their greater freedome of conuersation, and their lesse bashfullnes, togeather with more frequent occasions of temptation. From whence we see, it proceeds, that more men which vow Chastity in the world do offend against their vow then women: yea there are very few of that sexe who vowing Chastity in the world do violat their vow: in so much that oftentimes in a great citty, for the space of many yeares, you shall not

not hear of any ſuch: which is a ſigne, that it is a matter more eaſy for women to do then for men; & yet we ſee that men do laudably take vpon them ſuch vowes: neither can they by any meanes be excuſed frō thē, being once vndertaken.

If it be meritorious to keep Virginity in Religion, why is it not alſo in the World? For the circumſtance of the place alters not the merit of the worke, but the excellency it ſelfe thereof, and a deuout will vnto it: and this pious inclination

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may be had as well out of the ſtate of Religion, when a Virgin purpoſeth with her ſelfe to abſtaine from Marriage, and to conſecrate her virginity to Almighty God, that ſhe may ſerue him the more perfectly, that ſhe may follow the counſell of our Sauiour Chriſt, that ſhe may imitate our Lord, and his moſt bleſſed Mother, that ſhe may apply all her thoughts and affections to heauenly things, and to the health of her ſoule; for the excellency of the worke is equall on both ſides. Therfore

fore there is no reaſon, why the profeſſion of Chaſtity in the World, ſhould not be meritorious, as well as in Religion.

It is not only commendable in Monaſteryes, but alſo in the world, to do other good workes, as to pray, to faſt, to giue corporall and ſpirituall almes, to chaſtice our body, and to bind our ſelues by vow thereunto. Then if other good works looſe not their worth & eſteem, nor their merit before God by being done in the world; why ſhould

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should Virginity, and single life? Yea, as it is the more prayse-worthy to be temperate, and to abstaine sitting at a banquet, and to be able to bridle our appetite, euen in the very middest of prouocations; so likewise may it be a deed of greater merit to liue chastly in the world, where occasions of falling are more frequent: As for example, when there are lawfull reasons why such occasions might not be cōueniently shunned, which otherwise they would haue willingly auoyded.

The

The ſtate of being Religious, and to be ſhut vp in Monaſteryes, is not agreeable with the complexion of euery one: yea a great many, either are not apt for this ſtate, by reaſon of the weakenes of their body, or for other cauſes, or oftentymes their mindes are not eaſely wonne to it, and that moſt commonly for diuers ſufficient reaſons, which it is not neceſſary to reueale: and who now ſhould cõſtraine ſuch to marry, or to enter into Monaſteryes? Why ſhould it not be lawfull

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full for them to keepe their virginity in the world, & to vow themſelues vnto it? Is it either becauſe they wil not, nor cannot aſcend to the higheſt degree, that they muſt be therfore conſtrayned to ſtay in the loweſt, & may not keep a meane betwixt both? No man will thinke ſo, except he be induced with the ſpirit of *Iouinian*. The counſells and aduices of our Sauiour Chriſt are not ſo neceſſarely vnited one to the other, but that one may be followed without another, and by them-

themſelues, in diuers degrees. Wherfore as thoſe who deſire to obſerue the ſtate of Pouerty, are not bound vnto Chaſtity; ſo alſo thoſe which imbrace Chaſtity, muſt not therfore of neceſſity keep Pouerty, or Obedience, or ſhut themſelues vp in Monaſteryes.

CHAP. V.

The ſame is proued out of the commodities which this ſtate of life, being profeſſed, both in the world and in Religion, doth bring with it.

THE Cauſe why this ſtate of life is ſo com-

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mended by holy Fathers, as well in the one as the other, are the manifold cõmodities which it bringeth therwith. For in both, it is an imitation of Angelicall life; in both it is the making of our body as it were a burnt-offering to Almighty God; in both it is a spirituall Marriage, in which Christ is the spouse; in both it freeth from the irksome slauery of Marriage, and from the troubles which belonge vnto it; in both it deliuereth the minde from infinite cares

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& troubles; finally in both it maketh it free, and at liberty to apply it ſelfe vnto God, and to dwel as it were mentally and ſpiritually with the Bleſſed, in community of heauenly things.

Firſt it is an imitation of Angelicall life, as holy Fathers euery where do deliuer, out of the opinion of our Lord *Matt.* 22. Becauſe as Angells marry not, nor are troubled with carnall concupiſcence, but are euer attent to diuine matters, & entertaine themſelues alwayes in them; ſo in like

manner Virgins are sayd to anticipate the glory of the Resurrection, because marriage after the Resurrection shall cease.

Virginity is a burnt-offering: for as in a burnt offring the thing sacrificed is killed, and afterward all of it consumed in the honour of God, that no part therof remaines for humaine vse: so likewise a Virgin must first kill all carnall affectiõs in her selfe, & afterwardes offer vp her body, mortified after this sort by the fire of Charity, to Al-

mighty

mighty God, and reſerue no part thereof to any humaine or carnall vſe.

She is a ſpirituall marriage, becauſe by vow ſhe is bound vnto God as to her husband: for as the band of carnall marriage is not to be looſed; neither alſo is that of ſpirituall: yea that of ſpirituall Marriage, is much more indiſſoluble; for it cannot be looſed by death it ſelfe, but continueth in all eternity. Againe, as carnall marriage is effected for the mutuall enioying and comfort of both

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persons, and the bringing forth of children : so this Marriage is made; that the soule may please God the better, and receaue help & comfort backe againe from him, and that it may conuerse more familiarly, and with the greater delight with Almighty God, as with its Spouse.

And finally, to the end that hauing receaued seed of diuine grace from him, an immortall and glorious issue may be begotten to inherit in the world to come: wherein spiritual Marriage

is

is farre more happy then carnall; for the later is to the end, that of impure and corruptible ſeede, another man may be begotten, and that but to enioy a mortall life, and thereby ſubiect to infinite miſeryes: but the other is to the end, that out of diuin ſeed a mortall man ſhould beget, not another mortall man, but himſelfe, to an immortall and happy life. Therefore he perſwadeth himſelfe firſt vnto this martiage, and afterward by word & example profiteth others. To this may be lik-

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wise added, that as in carnall marriage, titles, and dignityes, and all the goods of either is communicated to both: so likewise in spirituall, the goods and dignityes of the espoused, belongeth also to the Spouse.

The desire of a wife is, that she may haue a husband, who is faire, noble, rich, powerfull, and courteous, and if it happen that she get such a one, she thinketh her selfe happy. But how much more happy, is a Virgin whose husband is the most fayrest, most noble,

ble, moſt rich, moſt powerfull, moſt gentle, and immortal Lord of heauen and earth, of Angells alſo, and of men. See more of this in S. *Ambroſe* in his firſt booke of Virgins.

For as much as belongs to the benefits and commodityes of holy Virginity, they are generally three. The firſt is, that it freeth the mind from innumerable troubles and afflictions vnto which the ſtate of matrimony either by meanes of the wife or by meanes of the childrē is ſubiect vnto; which

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which the Apostle insinuateth 1. Cor. 1. when he speaketh in this manner of those which are marryed: *Tribulationem carnis habebunt huiusmodi*; such shal haue the tribulation of the flesh. And first of all, is the seruitude of the wife, by reason that she hath not power of her owne body, & is made subiect in all thinges to her husband, must endure his frowardnes, his insolencies, his banquetting, drũkenes, iealousy, suspicion, incontinency, adultery, taunts, & blowes. Also she must follow

low him, ſticke alwayes to him, obey him and ſerue him as his ſlaue; ſo that many ſlaues in the world haue a more tollerable bō-dage, then ſome wiues vn-happily marryed; whilſt he ſpends her wealth and ſub-ſtance at dice, at play, in drinking, banquetting, pro-digall giuing, improfitable bargaines, improuident cō-tentions, and diuers other wayes, which his wife is not able to remedy.

Moreouer he leaueth the charge of prouiding for the whole houſe-hould to her

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her, and yet alloweth not wherwithall sufficiently to do it; and bringeth her oftentymes euen into that extremity, that she groweth halfe desperate. In the meantyme being oppressed and ouercome with too much impatience, she often curseth her husband, and wisheth all il hap to befal him, and desireth nothing more then his death. Neither are these thinges rare and seldome, but the whole world is full of them.

Now if we should add vnto all this, the troubles

that

that come continually by meanes of children, there would ariſe euen a whole world of miſeryes & afflictions. And although in the carnall Act of marriage there ſeemeth to be now & then a little pleaſure: yet of it owne nature, it is both vncleane (as a thing wherin we differ not frō a beaſt) and alſo full of ſhame and immodeſty; & in a moment it is paſt, and afterward rewarded with innumerable diſcommodityes. For preſently after Conception, there followeth a kind of

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irkesomnes, idle dreames, giddines, vnsetlednes of the head, melancoly, conuulsions of the hart-stringes, absurd longings after meates, and a generall perturbation of nature.

Then follow the paines of child-bearing which are both violent to the sense, & oftentymes endure long, and to many bring death also; and then the Child being borne, with what great care and solicitude must it be brought vp, vntill it come to be of some strength and perfection of nature.

How

How many tymes a day muſt it be made cleane, fed, made vp, apparrelled, laid to ſleepe, rockt in the cradell, taken out againe to giue it ſuck, and be held out. How many times muſt it be flattered and intreated with faire ſpeaches & with a thouſand pretty hypocriſies and flatterings, to make it leaue crying, or to ſleepe?

Theſe are the contynuall exerciſes of ſuch as be Mothers, and in ſuch they are imployed, not only all day long, but alſo moſt part of the night, ſo that they

can scarce take any rest but with often interruption.

I omit the sluttishnes, the ill sauour, the weeping, crying, & brauling, which they are constreyned dayly to suffer. I omit allso the cares and troubles, which they haue when their children begin to grow big, & to be exposed to diuers cl ã. ces of the world. What great greefe they haue, if it chaunce they should miscarry and dye; if by euil company they should be allured to villany and dishonesty; if they should proue stub-

ſtubborne and diſobedient againſt their Parents; if they ſhould ſpend & waſt their Parents goodes at play, drinking, or at any other vnlawful game; if without their Parents conſent they ſhould marry.

To theſe afflictions the whole life of all ſuch as are mothers, is always ſubiect; for albeit the Parents be very deuout and religious, yet it happens oftentymes that the children be wicked and lewd, and with their miſdemeanours, and ill liuing, torment their Parēts,

as wee haue examples in *Adam* and *Cain*, in *Noë* and *Cham*, in *Abraham* and *Ismael*, in *Isaac* and *Esau*, in *Iacob* and many of his sonnes, in *Dauid*, *Amon*, and *Absolom*, with infinite others: therfore since sacred virginity deliuers from all this, it is deseruedly to be numbred amongst the greatest benefitts that are.

Another commodity of virginity and single life is, that it freeth the minde frō all cares of gouerning a family, of increasing the stocke and wealth of their estate

estate, of marrying their children, & of leauing them ample Patrimonyes; for of these foure things all Parents are for the most part most careful & sollicitous; yea commõly their minds are so wholly addicted and giuen to such businesses, as they can scarce euer thinke seriously on God, or things belonging to the good of their soule.

These things they keep alwayes in minde, in these things they spend all their thoughts and affections, these things so waste and

weare out all the ability & powers of their mindes, as they haue no strength left to consider, or thinke vpon things that are eternall.

Greatly therfore is the misery of this estate to be pittyed; for the bondage of the mynd is more hurtfull a great deale, then that of the body; and the losse of good thoughts, is a greater domage, then the losse of money.

The third cõmodity of virginity and single life is, that it maketh the minde, being freed from the cares and

and troubles of Marriage, more fit & prepared to serue Almighty God, and procure its owne safety: and this is the greatest good of this life. For which cause it is commended specially by the Apostle the 1. Cor. 7. where he saith, *Mulier innupta &c.* A womā vnmarryed, and a Virgin thinketh on what belongeth vnto God, that she may be holy, both in body and minde.

There is nothing better nor more healthfull vnto our soule thē to serue God, and to endeauour the obtayning

teyning of our soules well-fare. To this purpose were we made, & adorned with these noble faculties of our soule, Vnderstanding, Memory, and Will. Wee haue not receiued these to imploy them about transitory and seruile matters, without any fruit at al, but to addresse them to eternall and celestiall things, for our great benifit and aduantage. All earthly things are to base & cõtemptible for our minds (which is aboue all visible things) to fixe, and exercise it selfe there about. The

shortnes it selfe of our life, togeather with the vncertainty & necessity of dying, might iustly recall vs from the care of temporall matters, & addresse our thoghts to the solicitude of thinges eternall. Whereupon the Apostle 1. Cor. 7. sayth: *Tẽpus breue est &c.* Time is short, it remaines, that such as haue wiues, be as those who haue them not; and those who mourne, like those who mourne not; & those who reioyce, like those who reioyce not; and those who buy, like those who possesse

possesse not; and those who vse this world, like those who vse it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away &c.

By which wordes he teacheth vs, that we should be no more affected and addicted to transitory things, then as if they did not belong vnto vs. We ought to haue care of nothing so much, as to auoyd eternall punishment, and attaine to euerlasting ioyes: for in comparison of these, all the good or ill of this world, ought to be of no account:

So

So that if there were nothing but madnes practised in the world, this would be the greatest, to neglect the highest and euerlasting thinges, & to follow that which is base and transitory, with so great hazard of eternall damnation.

Therfore as that manner of life is miserable, and to be auoyded by all wise men, which intangleth the mind with care of base & earthly thinges, howsoeuer glorious and honourable they seeme: So on the contrary, is that state happy &

moſt desirouſly to be imbraced, which freeth the mind from all theſe cares & troubles, and affoardeth it commodity to meditate on heauenly things, and to apply it ſelfe to the obtayning of its own welfare. And ſuch is ſingle life, as it hath byn ſhewed.

Neither in women only, but alſo in men ſingle life hath all theſe effectes: for moſt of thoſe thinges which we haue ſayd before of women, haue place alſo in men: yet men in Marriage are moſt commonly exposed

poſed to more diſcommo-
dityes and inconueniences
then women, becauſe the
whole care of maintayning
the heuſhould, and of the
greateſt buſines lyeth vpon
him; and infinite diſdaines
of the wife, offences, iea-
loſies, ſuſpicions, cõplaints,
and frowardnes are to be
endured, as *S. Hierome* pro-
ſecuteth it, very elegantly
out of *Theophraſtus* the Phi-
loſopher in his firſt booke
againſt *Iouinianus*, whoſe
words it ſeemeth heer good
to ſet downe.

Fertur, inquit, Aureolus &c.

Heer is brought (quoth he) a little goulden booke of *Theophrastus* written concerning marriage, in which he asketh this question, Whether a wise man should marry a wife or no? And when he hath defined, that if she were fair, wel broght vp, of good Parents, and if she were healthfull & rich, with these conditions a wise man might somtimes marry; he presently inferreth: But all these seldome match togeather in marriage, therfore it is not behoofull for a wise man to mar-

ry

ry &c. And then he ſets downdiuers reaſons which the ſame Philoſopher alledgeth for his opinion.

Firſt (quoth he) it hinders the ſtudy of Philoſophy; for no man can ſerue his bookes and his wife at once. There are alſo many thinges which are neceſſary for the vſe of Wiues, as gay apparell gold, Iewells expenſes, wayting women, variety of houſhold ſtuffe, guilded horſe-litters, and coaches. Moreouer you ſhal haue all the night long nothing but pratling, & com-

plaintes that this Dame weares better cloathswhen she goes abroad then she: This Lady, or Gentlewoman is much honoured and respected of all whersoeuer she comes; whilest I, poore soule, am despised & contemned of euery body. Why did you looke so earnestly on my Neighbours wife? Why did you talke with her mayd? Are you come frõ the Market, what haue yee bought? &c.

Her husband cannot haue a friend or companiõ, but straight she thinketh that the

the loue of another is her hatred. If there were a learned Maiſter in euery town, men ſhould neither forſake their wiues, nor be able to walke with ſo great a burthen. If ſhe be poore, it is coſt to help her, if rich, a torment to endure her.

Moreouer there is no choice of a wife, but what a one ſoeuer you chance to take, if ſhe be colerique, if a foole, if deformed, if proud, if ſluttiſh, what fault ſoeuer ſhe hath, we learne that afterward. A Horſe, an Aſſe, an Oxe, a Dog, the

worst slaue a man can entertaine; his apparell also, his kettles, his chayres, his cups, his earthen pots, all these a man may proue before he buy them, only his wife must not be shewed before she be had, for feare a man should so dislike her, that he would neuer haue her.

You must alwayes be looking on her face, and commending her beauty, for feare least if you looke on another, she thinke that her beauty displeaseth you. She must be called Mistresse

and

and her Birth-day muſt be made a Holy day: you muſt ſweare by her health, and you muſt pray that ſhe may out liue you: you muſt reuerence her that nurſt her, and her alſo that bare her when ſhe was a little one, her ſeruant, her brother-in-law, her little dandling, her pretty Page, her hyred Proour, and her Eunuch forſooth, for the longer continuance and more ſecurity of luſt (vnder all which names are prettily couched Adulterers.) And whomeſoeuer of all theſe ſhe affecteth,

eteth, he must be beloued too, euen by those to whom they are vngratefull.

If you commit the gouernement of the whole house to her charge, you must be her seruant. If you reserue any part of it to your selfe, she thinks you wil not trust her, & straight turneth into hatred, and scoulding, and vnles you beware of her betymes, you are in danger to be poysoned.

Old women, Wisards, brokers of Iewels and silke apparel, if you admit any of these

theſe into your houſe, you are in dãger of cuckolding: and if you forbid them, you do her wronge to ſuſpect her.

But to what end is it to watch her narrowly, when a wife that is vnchaſt can neuer be reſtrained: & if ſhe be chaſt, ſhe ought not to be reſtayned; for the conſtraint of chaſtity is but an vnfaythfull keeper. She only is truly to be named chaſt whocan be otherwiſe if ſhe wil. A faire wife is a bayte, aſwell in other mens eyes, as in his that hath her. A

ſlut

ſlut wil ſooner deſire others then they her. It is a hard matter to enioy that alone which many men ſeeke after; and it would be a trouble to haue ſuch a one, as no body would vouchſafe to affect. Yet it is a leſſe miſery to haue an ill fauoured wife, then to keepe a faire one true. There is nothing ſafely poſſeſt by one, which of euery body is wiſht for.

One ſollicits with his comlynes, another with his wit, another with his pleaſantnes, another with his money: by ſome meanes or other

other at laſt the Fort will be taken, which is on euery ſide ſo ſtrongely beſeiged.

But it may be obiected, that it is neceſſary for a mā to haue a wife, to take charge of the expēſes of his howſe, or to be a comfort to him when he languiſheth, or to auoyd ſolitaryneſs. To this I anſwere, that a faithfull ſeruant obeying the authority of his maiſter, and doing his buſines according to his will, diſpoſeth of matters a great deale better then a wife, who thinketh that her Miſtres-

ſhip cõſiſteth in doing that which is againſt her huſbands will, that is to ſay, to do that which ſhe hath a will to, not that which ſhe is commaunded to do.

And as for attending & comforting a man when he is ſicke, his friends and ſeruants, or ſuch poore ſoules as he hath made beholding vnto him, may better do it then ſhe, who vpbraides him, as it were, with the teares which ſhee ſheedes for him, yea ſells the very filth and droſſe therof, in hope to be his executour.

And

And by this boaſting of her carefullnes, neuer leaues him, til with her perpetual trouble, ſhe driues him into vtter deſperation.

But if her finger chance to ake, he muſt be ſicke for it, and neuer budge from her bed ſide. Or if ſhe be a good wife, and of a ſweete diſpoſition (which notwithſtanding is a rare bird) he muſt groane with her, whilſt ſhe is in child bed, & be payned with her danger.

As for the auoyding of ſolitarines, a wiſe man can

neuer be alone: he hath present all those which are, or euer were good, in his thoughts, & freely placeth his mind on what he will. That which he cannot do with his body, he imbraceth with his thoughts, & if there be sarcity of men to conuerse withal, he talketh with God; he is neuer lesse alone then when he wants all company.

Besides it is a most idle thing to take a wife, in regard to haue children by her that his family may not be extinct, or that he haue,

help

help & ayde in his old age, and alſo to know who ſhall inherit that which he leaues behind. For what is one the better when he is going out of the world, that another is called by his name, when as a ſonne cannot preſently be like his Father; and there are an infinite number of other men alſo perhaps called by the ſame name. Or what booteth it to nouriſh thoſe at hom, whō we hope may be helps to vs whē we are old, whē perhaps they either dy before vs, or become of ſuch

a peruerſe diſpoſition, as they will not ſuccour vs; or if they themſelues come to maturity of yeares, perhaps they thinke their parents liue to longe.

And as for heires, our friends & our neighbours whom we loue, are better & more ſure heyres vnto vs, being choſen thereunto by vs freely, thē thoſe whome wee are conſtreyned to haue whether we will or no: though indeed it be a for more aſſured inheritance to make our ſelues our owne heires, (by doyng good

good workes whilſt we liue, (for otherwiſe we do but abuſe the ſame) then to leaue it, being gotten all by our owne induſtry and pains, to the vncertein vſes of any others whatſoeuer.

Theſe reaſons and the like *Theophraſtus* diſcuſſing, what good Chriſtiã might he not make aſhamed of ſuch vanities and troubles, whoſe conuerſation ought to be in heauen, and who dayly ſayth *Cupio diſſolui &c.* I deſire to be diſſolued and be with Chriſt: as though he who may be a coheyre

with Christ himself, should desire to haue man to be his heire, and should wish for children, and be delighted in the succession of his posterity whome perhaps Antichrist shall peruert; when notwithstanding wee read that *Moyses*, and *Samuel* preferred others before their own children. Neither yet did they account thē children whome they sawe displease Almighty God.

Thus farre are S. *Hieromes* words, who afterward confirmeth the same with exam-

examples out of the old Teſtament. By which it is manifeſtly ſhewed how far ſingle life in the world is to be preferred aboue Marriage, and out of how many diſcommodityes & cares it doth deliuer a man; and what aboundance of helpe it affoardeth to a man, to paſſe ouer pleaſantly, and quietly this temporall life, and obteine a high degre in the euerlaſting. All which things if they ſhould be exactly weighed and conſidered of moſt men, I doubt not, but there would be farre

farre fewer who would so much admire, loue, and imbrace the seruitude, that Marryage oftentimes bringeth with it.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Merits of both States of life, to wit, of vnmarried and married.

SOME one will obiect, That if the paines and troubls of mothers be great in bearing and breeding their children, and in supporting the conditions and iniuryes of their husbands; great also are the merits of endu-

enduring them : which merits ſuch as are virgins cannot haue . Whence the Apoſtle alſo 1. *Tim* 2. ſaith: *Saluabitur &c*. She ſhall be ſaued, by bringing forth children &c.

I anſwere, that Parents may be moued with a double affection, to beget and bring vp children : to wit, with a meere humaine and naturall affection, & with a ſpirituall or diuine. A naturall affection is, when any one deſireth children for the conſeruation of his name & family that he may haue

haue heires to whome he may leaue his goods; that he may out-liue his owne death in his posterity; that he may be honoured in thē; that he may haue comfort and help by his children. All these are humaine respects and affections, and therfore of no merit, or esteeme before God; yet of their owne nature they are not ill, but indifferent. Wherfore those who out of such affection do contract Marriage, or beget childrē, or bring them vp begotten, merit nothing before Al-

mighty

mighty God, and looſe all their labours and charges which they are at, as far forth as this; to wit, that they ſhall not receiue eternall reward for them, but onely a temporall comfort or comodity. For as an humaine affection is not meritorious before Almighty God, no more alſo is the work which followeth out of it, although it be frequēt and laborious.

In like manner to loue and follow Honours, Riches, Magiſtracy, Dignityes and Pleaſures for the

commodity, splendor and sweetnes which we perceiue in them, although of it selfe it be no sinne; neither likewise is it of any desert, but rather appertaineth to the delight of such things as are the concupiscence of the flesh, of the eyes, and pride of life, and which proceede out of a corrupt nature, not out of the inspiratiõ of diuine grace.

The same likewise is to be sayd of the affections of Parents, whereby they wish and procure these cõtents & pleasures vnto their chil-

children. For euen as whē they desire and obtayne these things for themselues, they deserue nothing at the handes of Almighty God; no more likewise doe they when they doe the like in their childrens behalfe: yea this affection is not onely not meritorious before Almighty God, but also it is not so much as a worke of any vertue.

For first of all, that it not a worke proceeding out of any diuine or infused vertue, it is manifest, since it may be foūd also in Hea-

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thens themselues, and the most wicked persons that liue. Also that such affections proceed not out of any morall or Philosophicall vertue it is plaine, for they respect not their obiects, as they are honest and reasonable, as the natures of such vertues require, but as they are delightfull & cōmodious, or honourable.

Whence it is, that no man by such an affection becommeth praiseworthy, which is the propriety of vertue. As no man is worthy of prayse, for that he loueth or

getteth

getteth riches, honors, plea-
ſures, or for louing his child
becauſe he is fair, or becauſe
he is like him, for ſinging
wel, dancing wel, ſpeaking
well, or being indewed
with ſuch like ciuill orna-
ments or qualityes. Al ſuch
affections are only naturall
and indifferent, and there-
fore of no deſert or merit in
the ſight of Almighty God
before his Tribunall ſeate.

Therfore as he which
giueth almes to the poore
prodigally, and vayneglo-
rioufly to make himſelf ho-
noured and eſteemed the

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more of men, according to the wordes of our Sauiour, shal haue no reward before Almighty God, but receaueth all his reward in the prayses which he getteth of men in so doing: So those, which marry for respect of pleasure or riches, those which desire to haue children, or to bring them vp to haue contentment, who day and night onely take care, how they may leaue them a large and ample inheritance, that they may promote them to honours, offices, dignityes, or wealthy

thy marriages, deserue nothing before God, but receaue their reward in the temporall contentements, which by this meane they procure, either to themselues, or to their children.

Therefore to speake truely, their labours and cares are all lost; neither do they reape any fruit at all to be accounted of from all this; for nothing is to be esteemed of any great valew, but that which is euerlasting.

All temporall things are of small account, passing

away as shaddows, & therfore most vnworthy to spend al the vigour & principal acts of our soule about thē, which were ordained for things eternal. Herupō holy Scripture euery where calleth vs from the loue and desire of riches, honours, and pleasures, and telleth vs that such as are poore, meeke & oppressed, are only happy.

Neither are all these labours and paines of Parents onely vnprofitable, but they are also hurtfull, and the originall cause of infinite euils

euils. From hence it is, that there are such an infinite nũber of men in the world, who damne there owne soules (which otherwise might haue been saued) for their childrens sake, to mak them rich , or to promote them to Honours. For those that wil become rich as the Apostle witnesseth, *fall into temptation, and the snare of the deuill, and into many vnprofitable and hurtfull desires, which send them head long into damnatiõ, & destruction; for couetous desire is the roote of all mischeife.*

Marriage doth comonly force

force men headlong vnto this desire, for al mē would make their children rich, & leaue them a large inheritance; so that deseruedly also for that cause, that state of life is not to be greatly desired, which maketh all our paines and cares, most commonly, not only vnprofitable for our welfare, but also dangerous and hurtfull vnto vs, if it be not auoyded. Yet it followes not from hence, that wedlocke is euill: for neither Riches or Honnors be euil but good, which God also some-

ſometymes beſtoweth vpō vs, for the reward of ſome good deed or other; and in tymes paſt haue beene promiſed alſo to thoſe few who obſerued the law: but it is dangerous I ſay, to loue ſuch pleaſures and delights, to follow them, and to imploy al our endeauors onely in attayning of them, ſince they are but baſe & meane, and do hinder the loue and deſire of things eternall, & intāgle the minde in many ſnares.

In like manner, though Matrimony of it ſelfe be good,

good, and ordeyned by God, yet it drawes with it many cares and troubles, which through humanie frailty hinder the health of the soule, that it leades men secretly into many sins, and oftentimes vnto eternall damnation. Thus much of the humaine affectiō, out of which many men inclyne vnto Marryage.

The spirituall affection is, when Parents desire to haue children, to the end that they may instruct them in the feare of God, that they

they may teach them to serue him, that they may increase the number of the faithful, that by them many deeds of deuotion may be done, that God may be honored by them and the like: these affections rise not out of nature; but out of diuine inspiration, and are worthy of a man, as he is a Christian.

Whence I confesse that Parents who with this kind of affection desire to haue yssue, and bring them vp, as aforsaid, do merit greatly before Almighty God;

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& the wife also who with such a spirit desireth Marriage, shalbe saued by the bearing of children. And in this manner the wordes of the Apostle are to be vnderstood 1. *Tim.* 2. But yet it seemes to be more probable, that the Apostle in that place speaketh not of the merit, but of the estate and office of Marriage; & that to be also the meaning of this saying, *Saluabitur &c.* She shalbe saued, by doing the office of Marryage, and endeauouring to haue children: for so the Greeke text doth

doth import, as the learned do teach.

So likewise to the Romans *cap.* 4. 5. & 11. *Abrahã* is sayd to be the Father of those that beleiue, by hauing the foreskin or Prepuce cut off, that is to say, by those which are in that Estate. And in 2. *Cor. cap.* 6. *Per gloriam & ignobilitatem &c.* By glory and ignobility, by infamy and good credit, that is to say, in prosperity and aduersity. The same is confirmed by the words which the Apostle addeth, *Saluabitur & c.* She shalbe saued (saith

he) by the bearing of childrē, if she perseuere in faith, in loue, & in holynes, with sobriety: therefore he attributeth the cause of saluati- to fayth, & to loue &c. not to the procreation of children: yet I confesse also that this very deed is meritorious likewise, if it be done, as we haue sayd, out of spirituall affection: but it is otherwise, if it be done out of humaine only.

Moreouer if this estate and the offices thereof, be chosen & performed with a spirituall affection: neuertheles

uertheles single life is much better and more meritorious; both because it remoues innumerable occasions of distractions, imperfections, and sinnes, by which the estate of Matrimony is hindred in the offices of deuotion; and also because it affoardeth cōmodity of conuersing dayly with God and of being attent to diuin matters. Wherefore a Virgin oftentymes may merit more in one day, then a marryed woman in many monethes.

CHAP. VII.

Of certaine thinges to be obserued in this Estate.

TO the end that Virgins may the better preserue this treasure, & obtayne their scope and purpose more at larg, by which they haue so straitly bound themselues vnto God, and vndertaken this estate; holy Fathers haue prescribed certaine things to be obserued. First in their apparell; secondly in their exercises; thidly in the vse of their riches and wealth; & lastly in

in their conuerſation.

As for their apparell, it muſt not be coſtly, but decent and graue, without any kind of vanity or curioſity, without pride alſo, or any ſecular ornaments, ſuch as may repreſent the ſtate wherein they liue, and the forſaking of the world: by which euery man that ſees them, may know that they are Virgins, and haue an intent neuer to marry. For by this meanes they ſhall auoyd all importunityes and troubles, which ſuiters are accuſtomed to vſe: and be-

sides this they shall preuent many other inticements to the breach of their intent.

S. Cyprian in his booke *de disciplina & habitu Virginum*, handleth this place more at large, and with great elegancy: Continency (quoth he) & Chastity consist not only in the integrity of the body, but also in the honor of the Attire and apparell, being ioyned with modesty. She must not only be a Virgin really, but also she must be knowne, and be beleiued to be such a one: so that no man who seeth her

her who is a Virgin, may haue any doubt whether ſhe be ſo or no. For why ſhould ſhe go adorned, or attyred as though ſhe had, or would haue a husband? let her rather feare to pleaſe any, if ſhe be a Virgin; neither let her ſeeke her owne danger, ſince ſhe preſerues her ſelfe for a better &more deuout purpoſe &c. Neither ought a Virgin to be delighted with the ſhew of her owne beauty, or to take a glory in her owne perſon or comlynes, ſince ſhe hath no reſiſtance or war againſt any

any thing, so much, as against the flesh, nor any more obstinate enemy to ouercom thé her own body.

Afterwards he alleadgeth some, who excuse thémselues for their Riches and Nobility, for which respects they thinke that it is conuenient for them to go more richly attyred; whose excuse he refuteth at large, shewing in what thinges they should imploy their wealth.

To their habit also belongeth a Veyle, with the which it is meete that a Virgin

Virgin ſhould be couered when ſhe goeth abroad, leaſt either ſhe might ſee that which were not befitting, or her countenance ſhould be perceaued of others. For how many, I pray you, haue there beene in the world, who only by ſight haue either periſhed themſelues, or killed others? In ſo much that they muſt take principal heed of their eyes. And *Tertullian* hath written a particuler Treatiſe vpō this ſubiect of virgins veyling and couering their heads, which he iud-

ged

ged to be a thing so necessary, that he sayd: It was no lesse then a passion of lust, to a vertuous Virgin, euery tyme that she expoleth her selfe to publique view; to wit, because that therby she with her face open, casting her eyes freely about to see, & to be seene, is easily corrupted in spirit; & that the very gazing it selfe is a signe of an vnchast mind.

And againe afterward: The desire not to be veyled or couered is not a chast desire, but admiteth somwhat that belongeth not vnto a Vir-

Virgin; as alſo the deſire to delight others in beholding her; for true, entyre, and pure Virginity feareth nothing ſo much, as it owne ſelfe, yea it endureth not the eyes of other women that delight in gazing, ſince the eyes of it ſelfe are farre different from ſuch; it flyeth to the veyle of her head, as to a helmet, & as to a buckler which defendeth her; it is a protection againſt the blowes of temptation, againſt the darts of ſcandals, againſt ſuſpitions, & whiſpering, and emulation, yea

and against Enuy it selfe. After this put on the armor of bashfullnes, entrench thy selfe within the bull warke of modesty, build vp a wall for thy sex, which keepeth in thyne own eyes, and letteth not the eyes of others to enter. Thou hast married Christ and deliuered thy body to him, thou hast espoused the maturity of thy yeares to him. Goe according to his will and pleasure; it is Christ that biddeth those who are married to others, to veile themselues, much more those which

which are eſpouſed vnto him.

For this purpoſe the womens attyres of *Brabant* are very fit, which are called by them *Huekes*, which the very nobleſt Matrons of that Country vſe, when they would not be knowne in any publike aſſembly.

Let vs now come to the exerciſes which holy Fathers preſcribe to be vſed by virgins. Theſe are faſting, prayer, reading of ſpirituall bookes, and handy-worke, in the dayly vſe and variety wherof they may

spend all their tyme most profitably.

Fasting is as it were the foundation & ground of al other vertues; for by this the roote of many temptations, and by consequence of many vices, is cut of; the minde is made more fit to conuerse dayly with Almighty God, with great comfort & fruit, from whome it conceiueth all its good, frõ whence al Saints for the most part haue derived the begining of a spiritual life. By fasting, I meane not such fasting, as should weaken

or

or impaire nature: but such wherby the body becomes more healthfull, the mind more quicke, and the concupiscence more subiect.

S. *Hierome* commendeth greatly this exercise in his 8. Epistle to *Demetriades*, *de custodia virginit*. After (saith he) diligent taking heed of impure thoughts, you must put on the ornament of fasting, and sing with *Dauid*, I haue humbled my soule in fasting, &c. And then afterwardes. Fasting is not a perfect vertue of it selfe, but the foundation of

others, and is both sanctification & chastity, without which no man shall euer see God. It affoardeth staires to such as wil ascend to the top; & yet if it should be alone, it is not sufficient to crowne a virgins &c.

In which words it is to be noted, that fasting is tearmed by *S. Hierome*, Sanctification, and Chastity of other vertues. It is called Sanctification, because it maketh others vertues florish, and works their effects the better; and by this meanes it sanctifieth.

It

It is called Chaſtity, becauſe it procureth cleaneſſe of body and hart, wherin conſiſt all other vertues, without which no man ſhall ſee God.

And that this faſting muſt be moderate, & ſuch as may not weaken the body, but refreſh & quickē the mind, S. *Ierome* warneth vs in theſe words, when he ſaith: Neither do I preſcribe to yow immoderate faſting, or ſuch abſtinences, as ſhould be altogether without meat, by which bodyes that are tender and delicate may be

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quickly brought out of health, and grow sicke, before they haue layde the foundation of this holy conuersation.

S. Ambrose in his first book of virgins saith, that the sparing of meate, and abstinence from drinke, maketh a man to be ignorant of vice; for it maketh him to be ignorant of the causes therof. Therfore let this be rather a fast of sobriety thē affliction.

Prayer also, vnder which is conteyned the meditatiō of heauenly things, and the mysteries

myſteries of our faith, is principally neceſſary. Firſt, becauſe by this wee muſt obteyne dayly ſupply of Grace, wherby we may both reſiſt temptations and fulfill Gods diuine Commandements, and perſeuere to the end: wherfore our Lord warneth vs, that we alwayes pray, to wit, as much as conueniently we may, and as far forth as the fraylty, and neceſſary affaires of this world will permit vs: for our perſeuerance and eternall ſafety dependeth on Prayer.

Secon-

Secondly by Prayer & Meditation we lift vp our mynd to Almighty God, we place our selues in his sight and presence; wee cõsider his Maiesty, his Power, and his Wisedome, his Goodnes & his prouidence, his Mercy and his Iustice; we adore him, and praise him, we giue him thankes and blesse him; there we deale with him about the busines of our Saluation, and call to mynd all things which he hath both done and suffered for vs.

For this cause especially, a Vir-

a Virgin muſt abandone Marriage and ſecularity, & imbrace the ſtate of holy Virginity, according to the Apoſtole, to wit, that ſhe may thinke of theſe things which belonge to our Lord, that ſhe may be holy in body and ſpirit, that ſhe may behaue her ſelfe worthily in the preſence & conuerſation of Almighty God, that ſhe may ſticke ſo cloſe vnto him, that ſhe may neuer be drawn away: and as our Interpreter tranſlateth it, that ſhe may haue free leaue to beſeech any thing

thing of our Lord, without hinderance.

Heere are delights and spirituall comforts; in this consisteth as it were the Paradise of our soules; by these things our conuersation is in heauen, and we are made to enioy the society of Angels: without these whatsoeuer we do, is dry & barren, for all comfort and spirituall ioy proceedeth from the attentiue consideration of diuine matters.

From whence it commeth, that those who apply not themselues with great loue

loue and deſire, to Prayer and Meditation, they muſt needs remaine dry, or at leaſtwiſe they ſhall neuer taſt the moſt excellent delights of the ſpirit. By Prayer & meditation the mind is exercyſed, and groweth zealous in the function & habit of other vertues, becauſe the guift of grace is more aboundantly obteyned by it, whereby the labour of vertue is made more eaſy and delightfull.

Hence the Royall Prophet ſaith, *Viam mãdatorũ &c.* I haue runne the courſe and

way of thy commaundements, whilst thou dilatedst my hart with ioy. And why? because the vanity of the world, & the worth of vertue, and the Charity of God, and the reward of life to come, are shewed therby vnto vs. The consideration of all which, must needs greatly stir vs vp to all offices of vertue, and to a diligent care of our owne saluation.

Reading of Spirituall bookes also is commended by the holy Fathers, and commeth very neere to the exercise

exerciſe of Prayer. For as by Prayer we obteyne the conuerſation euen of God himſelfe; ſo do we it alſo by reading of ſpirituall books. Whereupon *Iſidorus* in his 3. booke of Sentences the 8. *Chap.* ſaith: Who alwayes wil conuerſe with God, muſt pray often, and read much; for when we pray, we ſpeake familiarly vnto God, but when we read, he ſpeaketh vnto vs.

And afterward he addeth, that Spirituall profit alſo proceedeth from praying and reading.

Laſtly handy-worke is greatly commẽded, for this is an eſpeciall and beneficiall Exerciſe for three things. The firſt is, therby ſomewhat to releaſe and refreſh our minde; for we cannot alwayes attend to read or pray, but it is needfull to recreate our minde by intermixing of labours ſometymes betwẽe, leaſt we ſhould be ouerwearyed: and this is done moſt conueniently by outward imployments, in which the mind is little or nothing at all buyſied.

Whence

Whence it followeth, that this manner of variety becommeth moſt gratefull to our weake and changeable Nature, and hath beene vſed in all ages by men and women, ſuch as were holy; and likewiſe it helpeth to anoyd idlenes, which is eſpecially to be taken heed of, by all ſuch as endeauour to attaine to the perfection of a deuout and holy life. For as *S. Ierome* in his Epiſtle to *Demetriades* ſayth, there is nothing more hurtfull to any deuout purpoſe then Idlenes, which doth not

only omit to get new perfectiō, but alſo waſteth that which was gotten before. And Bleſſed *Ignatius* ſaith, *Otium omnium malorum &c.* Idlenes is ſaid to be the beginning of all miſchiefe; for a minde that is not imployed, is open to all ſuggeſtions and impreſſions of the diuell.

Wherby ſometymes it commeth to paſſe, as *Seneca* witneſſeth, that although the body be guiltleſſe, yet the mind being idle, falleth into a thouſande ſorts of lewdneſſe. Wherfore it is

good

good to be alwaies doing of ſomewhat, and to imploy our minds about one good action or other, that the diuell may alwayes find vs buſy.

Laſtly it is beneficiall for the health of our body, and to giue good example alſo, and to releeue others. For no Almes is ſo pleaſing to Almighty God, no guift ſo acceptable, as that which is earned by our owne labours. S. *Hierome* diſcourſeth at large of this point in his epiſtle to *Demetriades*, which for breuities ſake I omit.

It resteth now to speake of the third, to wit of the vse of their Riches. Holy Fathers set downe the manner at large, how amongst Virgins, those who are wealthy shold imploy their meanes; to wit, not in superfluous apparell, not in banquetting and pleasures, not in adorning their bodyes, not in Iewels, pearles, rings, braceletes, not in rich & curious houshould-stuff, not in riot and excesse of brauery aboue their neighbours; but in the succour & releife of the poore, and of such

such as are seruants of God.

S. Cyprian in his booke *De disciplina & habitu Virginum*, discourseth at large vpon this thing: I will only alleadge one sentence for breuityes sake: *Locupletem te dicis &c.* Thou boastest (quoth he) that thou art wealthy and rich, and thou thinkest that it behooueth thee to vse the riches which God hath permitted thee to possesse. Do so, vse them, but let it be in such thinges as may concerne the health of thy soule. Vse them, but in that which God hath commaun-

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maunded thee to vſe them, & in which he hath ſhewed thee & taught thee how to doe. Let the poore find thee to be rich, and thoſe that are needy perceaue thee to be wealthy. Put out thy Patrimony to vſe, into the handes of Almighty God. Giue meate vnto Chriſt, that it may be lawfull for thee to ſuſtayne the glory of thy Virginity. And to the end that it may be rewarded by our Lord, beg it of him by the prayers of many. Lay vp thy treaſures there, where no thiefe can dig

dig them out, where no wait-layer, or night-robber can breake through. Purchaſe to thy ſelfe poſſeſſions, but let them be of heauen, where neither ruſt ſhall eate, nor hayle fall vpon, nor Sunne burne, nor rayne corrupt thy fruites, they being continuall and euerlaſting, free from the touch of ſecular abuſe &c.

And *S. Hierome* in his Epiſtle to *Demetriades* ſayth: *Conſideremus &c.* Let vs conſider how wiſely Wiſdome it ſelf hath ſpoken: *Sell what thou haſt*. To whome is this commanded

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commanded? To wit, to him to whome it is sayd: If thou wilt be perfect, sell not a part of thy goods, but all. And when thou hast sould them, what followeth? Giue them to the poor, not to the rich, not to thy Neighbors who are wealthy, not to maintaine excesse, but to suffice necessity. Whether he be a Priest, or thy cozen, or kinsman, thou shalt consider in him no other respect but his pouerty. Let the bowels of those that are hungry, not the fat banquets of those that surfet re-

ceaue

ceaue thy almes &c.

Yet for all this it is not the meaning of *S. Hierom*, that if a Virgin entreth not into Religiō, she should deprriue her selfe, of that which is needfull for her selfe to liue on in good sort; but that she bestow thereof which she hath superfluous, for the vse of the poore, & that after the manner which she iudgeth to be most to the honour of God.

S. Cyprian before mentioned goeth yet forward, speaking to those who hauing vowed Virginity, and are

very rich & wealthy, thus: But there be some rich women & very wealthy, who will set out, and shew their store, & say, that they must vse their owne goods. Let these first vnderstand, that she is rich, who is rich in God; that she is wealthy who is wealthy in Christ; that those be goods indeed, which be spirituall, diuine, and heauenly, which lead vs to god, which with stedfast possession remaine to vs when we be with God. But whatsoeuer things are earthly, gotte in this world,

and

and heere to remaine within the world, they muſt be contemned as well as the world it ſelf, whoſe pomps and pleaſures we doe then renounce, when with a better pace, we come towards God. S. Iohn doth exhort and ſtir vs vp, conteſting with his ſpirituall & heauenly voice: *Do not*, ſaith he, *loue the world, nor thoſe things which are in the world. If any man loue the world, the Charity of the Father is not in him, becauſe all that is in the world, is the concupiſcence of the flesh, and the concupiſcence of the eyes, and*

the ambition of the world, which is not of the Father, but of the concupiscence of the world. And the world shall passe and the concupiscence therof. But he that doth the will of God abideth for euer, euen as God abideth for euer.

Wherefore eternal & diuine thinges are to be sought after, and all things are to be done according to Gods will, that so we may follow the footsteps of our Lord, and his diuine examples, who did warne vs and say: *I descended not from heauen to do myne owne will, but the will of him that sent me.*

Now

Now if the ſeruant be not greater then his Maiſter, & he that is made free oweth duety to his deliuerer, we that deſire to be Chriſtians, muſt imitate that which Chriſt did. It is written, it is read, it is heard, and for our example celebrated by the Churches mouth. He that ſayth, he abideth in Chriſt, ought euen as he walked, himſelfe alſo to walke. We muſt therefore walke with equal ſteps, we muſt endeauour to follow his paces. Then doth the following of the Truth, an-

ſwere to the Faith of the name, and reward is giuen to him that beliueth, whē that which is beliued is alſo done.

Thou ſayſt, that thou art wealthy and rich: but *S. Paul* doth obiect againſt thy riches, and preſcribe with his wordes, that thy trimming and decking is to be moderated by an vprighteous end. Let women ſayth he, with ſhamfaſtnes and modeſty adorne themſelues, not in plaited hayre, nor gold, nor pretious ſtons nor gorgeous apparell, but

as

as it becõmeth women promiſing chaſtity by good conuerſation. *S. Peter* likewiſe doth conſent with theſe precepts and ſay: Let there be in a woman, not the outward decking of faireres, or of gold, or of goodly garmentes, but the trimming of the hart. Now if theſe men do admoniſh vs, that euen thoſe women, who are wont to excuſe the adorning of themſelues for their husbãds ſaks, are to be reſtrained, and moderated by religious obſeruation, according to Eccleſiaſticall

diſciplin: how much more expedient is it that a Virgin ſhould obſerue the ſame? Who deſerueth no pardon of this her trimming, neither can ſhe caſt her fault, vpon another, but ſhe her ſelfe muſt beare all the blame.

Thou doſt ſay, that thou art wealthy and rich: but not all that may, ought alſo to be done. Neither muſt inordinate deſires, and ſuch as ſpring vp out of the ambition of the world, be extended beyond the honeſty & ſhamfaſtnes of a Virgin.

for

for so much as it is writen: All thinges are lawfull, but all thinges are not expedient. All things are lawfull, but all thinges do not edify. But if thou adorne thy selfe ouersumptuously, and go abroad, so as al men may note thee, and draw the eyes of young men to regard thee, and make them sigh after thee, and nourish their vnlawfull appetite to desire thee, and kindle their fire to longe after thee, in such sort, that albeit thou perish not thy selfe, yet thou art the ruine of others, and

shew

shew thy selfe as a sword or poyson to those that looke on thee; thou canst not be excused, as if thou wert chast and honest in mind. Thy wanton attyre, and dishonest trimming doth reprehend thee; neither canst thou be numbred amongst the Damsels & Virgins of Christ, who dost liue so, as if thou wouldest be loued.

Thou dost say that thou art wealthy and rich; but it beseemeth not a virgin to vaunt of her riches, because holy scripture saith: what

what good hath our pride donne vnto vs, or what profit hath the vaunting of riches brought vs? All thoſe things or paſt away like a ſhadow. And againe the Apoſtle doth admoniſh vs and ſay: And they that buy, let them be as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that vſe this world, as though they vſed it not: for the figure of this world paſſeth away. S *Peter* alſo vnto whome our Lord commẽded his ſheepe to feed, and to defend them, and vpon whome he ſet and founded his

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his Church, did denie that he had either gold or siluer, saying that he was rich in the grace of Christ, and wealthy in his faith and power; by which he could do strange and miraculous things, and by which he aboũded in spirituall goods to attain the grace of glory. These goods and riches she can not possesse; who desireth to be esteemed rich, rather to the world than to Christ. Thus far S. *Cyprian.*

The fourth is her conuersation, wherein the holy Fathers prescribe to Virgins

gins, that they muſt auoyd frequentation of marriages publique banquettings, & the company and conuerſation of ſecular perſons, eſpecially of ſuch are light in their behauiour, and are giuen vnto the world; and that ſhe ſhould conuerſe with modeſt and deuout women.

So ſaith *S. Cyprian* in the place aboue cyted, *Quoſdam non pudet nubẽtibus intereſſe &c.* Some (quoth he) are not aſhamed to be preſẽt at Marriages, and in that liberty of laſciuious talke, to chatte

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with the reſt, and mingle now and then, impure & diſhoneſt ſpeaches; to heare that which is not fitting to be heard, nor lawfull to ſpeake againe; yea and to be euen preſent at laſciuious conferences, and drunken banquets, by which the fuell of Luſt is kindled. The Bride now accuſtomed to the patience of hearing vnchaſtnes, and the Bridegrome to be the more audacious, what place is it then to be at Marriages, for ſuch a one whoſe minde is neuer to be marryed? And though

though ſhe remaine both in body & mind a virgin, yet by her eares, and eyes, ſhe hath loſt part of that which ſhe had before.

S. Hierome likewiſe in his epiſt. to *Demetriades*. Decline and auoyd (ſaith he) the huſbands of Matrons, ſuch as ſerue the world, for feare leaſt thy mind be troubled, and thou heare either what the huſband ſayth to the wife, or the wife to the husband, for ſuch Conferences are poyſon vnto others. Chooſe women that are graue, and eſpecially

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Widdowes and Virgins to be thy companions, whose conuersation is approued to be good, their speaches well gouerned; & their outward modesty presages their sanctity within. Auoyd the wantonnes and immodesty of yong Maydes, who attire their heads stangely, weare lockes at their eares, make their skynne smooth by art, paint, weare straite bodies, and sleeues, must not haue a wrinkle in their cloathes, weare creaking shoes, and all this forsooth, that vnder the name of a Mayde,

Mayde, they may ſeeme the more ſalable. For the comportment and inclination of the Miſtreſſe, is oftentymes iudged and proportioned, by that of the wayting woman, and ſuch as they keep company withal &c.

S. Hierome goeth on thus: And this likewiſe a Virgin muſt take ſpecially heed of, that ſhe neuer talke or cõuerſe at any tyme alone, with any man, whether he be ſeculat or religious, no not ſo much as with her ghoſtly Father, without the company of others: but

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let all things be done openly, where they may be beheld of others. Or if it be necessary at any tyme to talke with any man within doors, let it not be done, vnles some other be present who may see al. For it is an vnseemly thing for a man, thogh be her Confessarius, yea religious (& though his habit should make him seeme to be euen of the sanctity of S. Iohn Baptist) to be alone with a woman in a chamber, the doore being shut, and without any other present; whether it be

vnder

vnder pretenſe of Confeſſion, or any ſpirituall inſtruction whatſoeuer. Let her remember that *Thamar* in priuate, for want of preſence of others, was rauiſhed by her owne brother. Let her remember that for the moſt part all that haue fallē in this kind, haue done it through the neglect of this aduice.

If there were no conferēce in priuat, there would hardly any diſhoneſty be euer committed. Therfore this eſpecially is to be obſerued of a virgin, as a pre-

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cept, That she keep herselfe vndefiled, both before God and men

S. Ambrose also in his 2. bo. vpon S. *Lukes* ghospell saith: *Trepidare virginum est &c.* virgins ought to tremble and feare, as often as any man comes into their presence, and be affrayde to speake vnto any man &c. he speaketh of such a one when she is alone (for in priuate they are fire and tow to one another:) and the diuell neuer more imployeth all his strength and endeauour, then at such a tyme, for

feare

feare leaſt ſo fit an occaſion ſhould eſcape without benefit vnto him. See more concerning this matter in *S. Hierome* in his 8. 9. 10. 11. and 22. Epiſtle.

Of any vow of Obedience to be made to ones ghoſtly Father, I finde nothing written in holy Fathers, neither do I iudg it expedient (vnleſſe in ſome few who are truly perfect, & are become euen maiſters as it were, in the way of Perfection) by reaſon of many diſcommodityes, that may follow thereof.

Wher-

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Wherfore it is deſcruedly forbiddē in the Rules of the Society of Ieſus, that any ſuch Vow ſhould be admitted by any Father of that Order. To which alſo may be added the ſolemne decre of the Prouinciall Councel of *Mechline* which by chaſice I happened vpon lately, where in the 5. tytle the 7. *Chap.* are theſe words. *Nemo aliquem ad perpetuò &c.* No Ghoſtly father ſhall bynde any one, neuer to confeſſe his ſinnes to any other then to him &c. And this Synod declareth all ſuch Obligation

tion or promiſe, though confirmed by vow, to be vnreaſonable, indiſcreet, voyd, and of no effect; & therefore as far, as it ſhalbe needfull, doth by this preſent Decree ordeyne it to be ſo. I omit alſo many other things which may be alleadged for this purpoſe.

Theſe preſcriptions of holy Fathers, if a virgin keep, liuing in the world, ſhe ſhall be happy, and her Eſtate and condition ſhall come neere to the perfectiō of a Religious life.

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CHAP. VIII.

Whether single life, confirmed by Vow, may be properly called an Estate.

SOME seeme to make doubt, Whether single life cõfirmed by vow, ought properly to be called an Estate, nor do I know vpon what grounds. Neuertheles it may be easily gathered out of that which hath byn sayd before, that this manner of liuing, may be properly called an *Estate*, and that

that ſuch as proteſſe the ſam may be rightly ſayd to haue choſen, and to be of an Eſtate.

For an *Eſtate* is nothing els, but a manner of life, in the which it is purpoſed ſo to cõtinue, that it may not be lawfull to goe out therof into another, as *S. Thom.* 2. 2. *quæſt.* 183. and other Doctours, doe euery where teach: but vowed Chaſtity or Virginity is a manner of life, wherein it is firmely purpoſed to continue, ſo that it is not lawfull to forſake the ſame &

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marry; therefore it is properly an Estate.

Henriques teacheth the same in his 12. *Quodlibet*, where he sayth, That the estate of Virginity or widdowhood is no lesse to be accounted an Estate in the Church of God, then the Estate of Marriage. And *Caietan* affirmeth, that this doctrine of *Henriques* is true, according to the Law, if Virginity or Widdowhood be kept, or professed by obligation of vow.

And surely if there be in the Church an Estate of

of Marriage, why ſhould there not be alſo an Eſtate of Virginity or widdowhood? If there be an Eſtate of thoſe which are wedded, why ſhould there not be the like of thoſe that liue continent, eſpecially when S. *Cyprian* witneſſeth; *That this is the more beautyfull part or portion of Chriſt*. If marriage with a mortall man or woman, which can continue but a ſmall tyme, ſetleth a man in an Eſtate, why ſhould not alſo an eternall marriage with Chriſt himſelf, which is neuer to haue

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end, effect the same? Those who at this present are in the state of wedlocke, continue not longe therin, but after a litle time by death of the one party, must go out of it, into the estate of such as liue single: but such as are now in the Estate of thos that liue continent, shall neuer go out of it, but alwayes remaine therein. From whence it appeares that this is rather, and more perfectly to be tearmed an Estate, then that of Wedlocke.

Neither doth it auaile, that

that this vow of perpetuall Virginity may be diſpenſed with all, and that therfore this Eſtate ſeemeth not to be firme & immoueable. Firſt, becauſe ſuch a diſpenſation may be only graunted by the Pope himſelfe, yea is very ſeldome graunted, and that for matters of great importance: otherwiſe ſuch releaſe is not of force before Almighty God; but that which is only cõprehended vnder the power of the Pope may be lawfully thought impoſſible to vs, and therefore it diminiſheth

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ſheth not the immobility or remouall of this eſtate: for it is ſufficient, that by vs as much as is on our parts, it is firme and immoueable, in ſo much that it cannot be altered by vs; otherwiſe Religion it ſelfe ſhould not be an Eſtate, ſince the Pope may vpon iuſt occaſions of great importance, releaſe a Religious man from the obligation of his Order, diſpenſe with his vowes, and permit him to marry.

Secondly alſo, becauſe Marriage is an Eſtate, yet it may be many wayes diſſol-

ued,

ued, to wit before carnall knowledge of one another, by entring into Religion; and also after the knowledg of one another by death of the wife, or husband. Also by the Adultery of the husband, the wife hath right of a diuorce, whereby the Marriage it selfe is dissolued euen to euery duety & coniugall act, as though it had beene no marriage at all, although the habituall obligation remaine.

Finally if it be contracted in the Estate of infidelity, it may be dissolued,

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although it were consumated, by copulation, if so be the one be conuerted to the Catholike fayth, and the other perseuere in Infidelity. Therefore Wedlocke is far more easily, & more wayes dissolued, then the vow of Virginity: and yet that hindreth not, but that it is, and may be truely called an Estate; much lesse therefore shal that power of releasing it, which consisteth only in the authority of the Prince of spirituall matters, hinder the vow of Virginity of being tearmed an Estate.

Third-

Thirdly a Cleargy Eſtate is made a true Eſtate by meanes of the Vow of Chaſtity, added to holy Orders, and hath ſufficient firmeneſſe; and yet the Pope may eaſily take it away, eſpecially in a Deacon, and giue him leaue to marry. Therefore it followeth &c.

Laſtly, Seruitude is a true Eſtate, according to al lawes, and yet at the Maiſters pleaſure, the ſeruant may be enfranchiſed, and made free: Therefore that extrinſecal power of taking away any obligatiõ, which con-

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consisteth not in our owne powers, doth by no meanes impaire the assuredneſſe & certainty of an Estate. For it is inough, that it is firme and immutable on our part. And the reason is, becauſe he is sufficiently sayd to be in an Estate, who maketh choice of a certaine kinde of life, and settleth himself firmely therein, so that he cannot take any other vpon him differēt vnto this, but must continue therein, euen vnto death. But he who imbraceth single life, and byndeth himselfe by

vow vnto it, chooseth to himselfe a certaine kind of life, & so establisheth himselfe therein, as he cannot passe out of it, vnto the contrary. Therefore he is in an Estate.

You will aske perhaps, Whether this Estate may be called an Estate of Perfection? I answere, that it is not a complete Estate of Perfectiõ, but only in part, because it is a notable part of the Estate of perfectiõ for some Estates include more, & others lesse. An Estate of Perfection which is entire and

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and complete, includeth also the vow of Pouerty and Obedience, both which a Virgin vowing Chastity in the world, may also after her manner, imitate and supply before God.

FINIS.

THE WIDDOWES GLASSE.

ABRIDGED

Out of the Reuerend Father Fuluius Androtius, *of the Society of Iesus, and others.*

ANNO M. DC. XXI.

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THE PREFACE TO ALL deuout Widdowes.

BECAVSE thou haſt loued Chaſtity & remained a Widow after thy husbād, ther-

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fore the hand of our Lord hath ſtrengthned thee, & thou ſhalt be bleſſed for euer. Theſe wordes were ſpoken to the holy, vertuous, and renowned Widdow *Iudith*, who for her chaſt Widdowhood, deſerued to be ſo ſtrengthened of our Lord, that ſhe ouercame, and killed the great and cruel *Holofernes*, deliuered the people of Iſraell from tribulation and death, and reduced

duced them to their former peace and tranquillity.

And for this cauſe did ſhe alſo deſerue to be exalted to the Heauens, by *Ioachim* the high Prieſt who withall the people, bleſſed her & ſayd: *Thou art the glory of Hieruſalē, thou the ioy of Iſrael, thou the honour of our people, becauſe thou haſt done manfully, and thy hart was ſtrēgthned from aboue &c.*

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And beſides all this, for her chaſt Widdowhood did ſhe merit an euerlaſting bleſſing from our Lord, to wit, aboundance of all graces in this world, and perfect felicity in heauen.

In like manner all vertuous Widdows following theſe her traces and footſteps ſhall deſerue to be cõforted by our Lord with ſpirituall graces, vertues, and gifts of the holy

holy Ghoſt, in ſuch ſort, that they ſhalbe euer bleſſed and happy, if deuoutly they perſeuere in their chaſt Widowhood, & ſhal alſo deſerue to ouercome & trample the diuell vnder foot, ſignifyed by the aforeſayd proud and cruell Captaine *Holofernes*. And to the end, that they may thus conſtantly and deuoutly perſeuere in the holy Eſtate of Continẽcy in their widdowhood,

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we will, with the help of the holy Ghoſt, ſay ſomething to this purpoſe, as as wel out the holy Scriptures, as ancient Fathers and Hiſtoryes.

THE

THE WIDDOWES GLASSE.

CHAP. I.

VVho are to be accounted truely VViddowes.

THERE are sayd to be three kindes of Chastity, to wit, that of Marriage, that of Widdowes, & that of Virgins: al three signi-

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ſignifyed by the good ground mentioned in the Holy Ghoſpell, wheron the ſeed fell: The firſt wherof yielded fruit thirthy fould, the ſecond ſixty fould, and the laſt an hundred. But they who cannot yeild the hundred-fould fruit, let them at leaſt offer vp ſixty, to ſhew themſeues more liberall towards our Sauiour.

And for as much as all perfection of man conſiſteth in abandoning and forſaking carnal and worldly things, & drawing neer and ioyning himſelfe vnto God

God his Creatour, loning him, fearing him, ſeeking him, thinking on him, contemplating and honouring him in euery thing and action; this can hardly be affected in the ſtate of Marriage, eſpecially by womē, who hunting after, & dayly following the delightes and pleaſures of the world, are hindred thereby, for the moſt part, from treading the true path which leadeth directly thereunto. But Widdowes who are free from ſuch cares and troubles, and haue a true deſire, may with great

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great caſe and facility performe the ſame to their great comfort.

Now, there be diuers ſorts of Widdowes. Some, as ſoone as their huſbands be dead, purpoſe ſo marry againe, for ſome temporall comfort and conſolation, not hauing any diuine Inſpiration to ſerue God Almighty in that Eſtate, and are in danger to offend him. Of this ſort of widdowes S. Paul ſpeaketh, when he ſaith. *I will, that the yong widdowes do marry againe, & become mothers of families, not to giue occaſion*

casion to the Diuell to tempt them. And this is not ill but approued of all. But when a widdow will marry againe for any disordinate appetit, or because she is very rich, or faire, or sought after by some one that is placed in a high degree of Honour or State, or for any other vicious occasion, or ill end, without doubt this her desire is naught, nor is she to be reckoned, or worthily called a widdow, as long as she remaynes with this desyre, although she do not actually marry againe.

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There is another ſort of widdowes, who though they do not purpoſe to marry againe at all, eyther for that they haue no dowry, or for feare leaſt they happen vpon an ill husband, or for ſome other ſecret or manifeſt reſpect, yet is their manner of life and conuerſation, not like indeed vnto widdowes: for that they will allwayes be gadding abroad, tatling, & goſſipping, euen with thoſe who be not reputed of the beſt edification. And theſe, forſooth, will be finely apparelled

parelled: and though they haue veyles, yet will they scarcely couer their heades with them; their eyes must be rolling vp and downe, they must go to banquets weddings and playes, they must tell tales, heare & tell newes, & carry themselues euen as meere secular, ordinary, and the worst sort of people. These are to be auoyded and shunned by all true widdowes: and these be those of whome S. Paul speaketh in another place, saying: *Take heed of such younge widdowes, for after that they haue*

liued riotously, and licentiously in Christ, they will marry, carrying with them their damnation, for that they haue broken and made voyd their first faith. &c. And for these it were better that they did marry againe, then liue as they do.

Another sort there is, who neuer intend, nor do indeed marry againe, but liue chastely & vertuously, both in act and desyre. But yet they do it not for the loue of God, but rather for some humaine respect, as for the loue of their childrē, their goods, or the like. And although

although according to the eſteeme of the world, they liue honeſtly, and are reputed for Venerable Mothers and Matrones; yet are they wholy dedicated to the ſeruice of the world, & haue little feeling or guſt of ſpirituall things; and do but ſeldome frequent the Sacraments or ſermons, faſt only but when the church commandeth them, or doe imploy themſelues in any other ſpirituall Exerciſes. Theſe I do intreat, by the bowels of Chriſt Ieſus, that they will no longer imploy

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the gifts and graces which they haue receaued frō our Lord, to the honour and seruice of the world, to the end they may haue their reward in heauen, and not on earth.

There is another sort of widdowes also, who make a firme purpose and deliberation, to conserue and keep their chastity & serue God with all their hart: & of these there are two kinds. One who cannot separate themselues from their children, or other parents, either for the charge they haue

haue of thē, or becauſe they cannot ſo wel liue alone, or for ſome neceſſity, or charity in gouerning their family: and theſe although they be not wholy free from the world, nor are dedicated to the ſeruice of God; notwithſtanding al the paynes and labours they take, they doe it principally for the loue of God, of whom they ſhalbe rewarded with life euerlaſting. Theſe Widdowes are not any to be remoued, or drawne away from this kind of life, but are, according to S. *Paul*,

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greatly to be honoured and esteemed.

The other kind, are those Widdowes, who desirous to serue God, & may commodiously separat thē-selues from their parents, friends, or family, and be more free to attend to prayer and other deuout exercises; yet they will not, thorough a kind of pusillanimity, or little courage, or els for compassion to their friendes, or for some other reason. Neither are these to be condemned, but esteemed in a second, or third

degree

degree from the former.

The last sort of widdowes, are the true, & worthily so called, Widdowes, who dispatching themselues of al worldly impedimẽts, do attend only to the seruice of God cõtemplating him, and meditating on him day and night. And these are placed in a more quiet and peaceable Estate, then any of the others aboue named, and are entred into the right, and direct way of perfection.

In this Estate liued that Holy Widdowe *Anne* the Prophetesse,

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Propheteſſe, recorded by S. *Luke*; who is ſayd to haue ſerued God in faſting & prayer, remaining night and day in the Temple. And if ſuch Widdowes, who haue a deſire to liue vertuouſly cãnot match or come neere to *S. Anne*; yet let thẽ come as neere vnto her as they can.

So as I conclude, that the true Widdow, is ſhe, who not only conſerues her Chaſtity in the world, but alſo whatſoeuer ſhe doth, ſhe doth it purely for the honour and ſeruice of Almighty

mighty God. And for that euery widdow doth not know how to exerciſe her ſelfe in the truly ſeruing of God, vnleſſe ſhe know the ſcope and end therof, I purpoſe heere to ſet downe briefly in what manner ſhe is to do the ſame.

CHAP. II.

Of the Intention, and Exerciſe of a true VViddow.

VVHEN a Widdow hath well conſidered of her Eſtate & firme purpoſe to ſerue God, it is neceſſary, that firſt ſhe vnderſtand

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derstand what is the end & scope of this kind of life, that conformably therto, she may addresse all her workes and actions.

The first and principal end then is, that not onely Widdowes but euery Christian also ought to liue wel and in the feare of God, whome she must loue more then her owne soule: and therefore she must labour, that by al her endeauours & actions the name of God may be euer blessed & praised, Christian fayth and religion aduanced, and honou-

noured. This belongeth more to Widdowes then to many others, who consequently must be mortifyed, and of a chast and pure life. For that they hauing lost their carnall Spouses, they ought to seeke for no other but their Spouse Christ Iesus. So as a truely deuout Widdow ought so to inflame her hart with the zeale of Gods honour, that she should choose rather to dye, then that by her means, her Spouse should be any way dishonoured.

Secondly she ought with

as great zeale seek and procure her owne saluation, considering that she is not alwayes to remayne in this world, because it is ordayned for al men once to dye, and then of necessity, to go either to heauē, or to intollerable torments in Hell, or Purgatory. And therefore hauing as it were, lost and forgone all the Consolations of this transitory world, she must force her self, to get & conserue those that be celestiall, and euerlasting.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Documents for VViddowes out of S. Paul.

SAINT *Paul* wryting to *Timothy* sayth: *Honour VViddowes.* He meaneth such Widdowes who liue vertuously according to the rule of Widdow-hood, that is to say, to gouerne wel their families, not only their children, or their kinsfolkes, but also their subiects, instructing them in good life, manners and vertue, and when it is needfull to reprehend and correct them.

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Secondly he sayth, That Widdowes ought to hope in God, to trust in his mercy; in him alone to seeke for Comfort and consolation, hauing dayly their mind eleuated in God in al humility, praying often, and imploring his diuine ayde to preserue them from all euill, to forgiue them, (and all sinners) their sins, to repleniſh them with his gifts and graces, and lastly to guide them to eternall felicity.

Thirdly he sayth, That a VViddow entertayning

worldly & carnall conſola-
tions, & paſſing her dayes
in mirth, ioylity, & vanity
is accompted for dead. For
although ſhe liue according
to the body, yet is ſhe dead
according to the ſpirit; nor
can ſhe once do any good or
meritorious work, worthy
of heauen.

Fourthly, he comman-
deth widdowes, That they
ſhould be irreprehenſible in
all their words and deeds;
that is to ſay, that in all
their actiõs they giue good
example, & that they keep
themſelues, not only from

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cõmitting of mortal crims, but euen from the least veniall sinnes that may be. Whence it followes, that if they liue vertuously, hũbly, in feare and vigilancy, it may be said of them, as it was said of *Iudith*, that most noble and deuout widdow, *That neuer was there foũd any man who spake euill of her.*

Fifthly he sayth, That the Widow ought to think vpon those things that belong vnto God, to the end she may be holy & sanctifyed in body and spirit &c.

CHAP.

CHAP. IIII.

The prayse of VViddowhood, out of S. Hierome.

SAINT *Hierome*, amongst the rest of Ancient Fathers, is not the last, nor least that hath prayſed widdowhood; nay I may ſay, he hath exalted the ſame aboue many, if not aboue all the reſt. And to begin firſt with an Epiſtle of his to *Furia*, a Noble young Lady and widdow of Rome, thus he wryteth vnto her in cõmendation of the crown of Widdowhood.

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You desire in your letter, and humbly intreate me, that I will answere you, or rather write vnto you in what manner you may liue, & conserue the crowne of widdowhood, without any blemish of the honour of your good Name. My mind reioiceth, my bowells do daunce, my affection doth leape, because you desire to be such after your husbands death, as your mother *Titiana* of holy memory was a long time her husbād liuing. Her praiers and deuotions are heard. She hath

obtai-

obtained in her only daughter, that which she possessed whilest she liued.

You haue moreouer a very great Priuiledge of your Ancestours, that euen from *Camillus*, either none at all, or very few women of your stocke was married the second time: so that you are not so much to be praised, if you remain a widdow; as to be detested, if being a Christian, you perfourme not that, which heathen women for so many ages haue obserued. I say nothing of *Paula* & *Eustochiũ*, flowers of

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of your family, least I may seeme to take occasion by the exhorting of you, to praise them. I let passe *Blesilla* which following her husbād your brother, in a short space of life, fulfilled many yeares of vertue.

And I would to God that men would imitate the praises of women, & wrinckled ould age would performe that which voluntary youth doth offer. Wittingly & willingly I thrust my hand into the fire. Many countenances wil frowne, many armes will be spread abroad,

abroad, and angry Chremes will rage with his foaming mouth. Many great personages will be incensed against my Epistles: the whole company of Nobles will thunder out, and say I am a witch, that I am a seducer, worthy to be banished from all ciuill common wealthes. Let them adde, if they will, a Samaritane also, that I may acknowledge my Lords title.

Surely, I do not deuide the daughter from her father Neither do I say that of the gospell, Suffer the dead.

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to bury the dead. For whosoeuer beleeueth in Christ liueth, and whosoeuer beleueth in him, ought surely to walke, euen as he walked. Honour your father, but so, as he seuere you not from your true father. So long acknowledg the linck of your bloud, how long he acknowledgeth his Creatour. For otherwise Dauid will presently sing vnto you: Heare O daughter, & see, and incline thine eare, and forget thy people, and the house of thy father: and the King will desire thy beauty

beauty, because he is thy Lord, thy God, and thy King.

O great reward of forgetting ones Father! The King wil desire thy beauty: because thou hast heard, because thou hast seene, because thou hast inclined thy eare, & forgot thy people and the house of thy father; therfore will the King desire thy beauty, and will say vnto thee: Thou are al faire, O my Deare, and there is no spotte in thee. What thing more faire then the soule, which is called the

daughter of God, and ſeeketh no forraine ornaměts? ſhe beleeueth in Chriſt, and with this ambition ſhe goeth to her ſpouſe, hauing the ſame to her Lord, and to her ſpouſe.

What miſeries mariage haue, you haue learned in marriage it ſelfe: and you haue bene filled with that which you longed for, euen vnto loathſomenes. Your iawes haue tryed moſt bitter choler, you haue caſt out thoſe ſower & vnwholſom meates, you haue eaſed your boyling ſtomake. Why wil you

you yet throwe in againe that which once was hurtfull vnto you? The dogge returneth to his vomit, and the sow againe to her wallowing in the mire. The very brute beastes, & restles birdes, do not fall the secõd time into the same snares & nettes.

Do you feare least the family of the *Furij* be extinguished, and least your father haue not a babe by you, which may creepe in his bosome, and beslauer his necke? What, I pray you? haue all which are maried,

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children ? And those children which they haue, do they alwaies answere to their kinred ? Yea surely *Ciceroes* sonne did resemble his fathers eloquence : and *Cornelia* your Aunceſtreſſe, an example of honeſty and fecundity, had much ioy of the *Gracchi* her ſonnes. It is ridiculous to hope of a certainty for that, which both many haue not had, & haue loſt when once they had it.

To whom wil you leaue ſo great riches ? To Chriſt who cannot dye. Who ſhall be your heire ? he which is

also my Lord. Your father will mourne, but Christ will reioyce; your family will be sorowfull, but the Angels will be ioyfull. Let your father do what he wil with his substance: you are not his, by whom you were borne, but his by whom you were borne againe, and who redeemed you with an exceeding great price, euen with his bloud.

So far, ould good S. *Hierom*. Where you see what esteeme he maketh of Widdowhood, yea in a young, noble, and beautifull Lady.

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And no leſſe doth he in another Epiſtle of his to *Marcella*, commending the courage and reſolution of *Bleſilla* a young & Noble widdow alſo. Thus then he writeth to *Marcella* of *Bleſilla* her ſicknes.

Abraham is tempted in his ſonne, & is found more faithfull. Ioſeph is ſould into Ægipt, that ſo he may feed his father & brethren. Ezechias is terrified with his death at hand, and diſſolued into teares, hath his life prolonged for fifteene yeares. Peter the Apoſtle is

afflicted

afflicted, with our Lords passion, and weeping bitterly, he heareth; Feed my sheepe. Paul a rauening woolf, and another young Beniamin is stroken blind in a traunce, that he may receiue his sight: and being compassed with a suddaine horrour of darknes, calleth him Lord, whom before he persecuted as man.

Euen so now, O *Marcella*, we haue seene our louing *Blesilla* thirty daies continually to haue bene tormented with the burning of an ague, that she might learne

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to reiect the delights of that body which ſhortly after is to be conſumed with wormes. To her alſo came our Lord Ieſus, and touched her hand, and behould ſhe ariſing, now ſerueth him. She ſauoured ſomewhat of negligence: and being tied with the bandes of riches, ſhe lay in the ſepulcher of the world. But Ieſus groned, and being troubled in ſpirit, cried out; *Bleſilla*, come forth. Who aroſe when ſhe was called, and being come forth, now ſitteth at the table with our Lord.

Let

Let the Iewes threaten and ſwell, let them ſeeke to murder her who hath bene raiſed vp againe; and let the ōly apoſtles reioyce. She knoweth, that ſhe oweth her life vnto him, who did reſtore it. She knoweth that ſhe ēbraceth his feete, whoſe iudgment lately ſhe feared. Her body lay almoſt dead: and death approaching did ſhake her gaſping members. Where were then the helpes of her kinred? where were then the wordes full of vanity? She oweth nothing vnto thee

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thee O vngratefull kinred, which dying to the world is reuiued vnto Christ. Who is a Christian, let him reioyce: he that is angry, sheweth that he is no Christian.

A widdow looſed from the bond of marriage, needeth nothing but perſeuerance: But doth the courſe garment offend any perſon? let Iohn offend him, then whom, amongſt the ſonnes of women there was none greater: who being called an Angell, baptized our Lord himſelfe, for he alſo

was

was cladd with a Camells skynne, and girded with a girdle of hayre. Do groſſe meates diſpleaſe them? nothing is more groſſe then locuſts. Let thoſe women rather offend Chriſtian eies who with vernish and colours paint their eies, and cheekes: whoſe plaiſtered coũtenance deformed with ouermuch ſhining, doth reſemble Idols. Who if they happen for want of heed to let fall a teare, it trickleth downe in a furrow: whom not ſo much as the very number of their yeares can perſwade

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perſwade that they are old: who with other ſolkes hair ſet forth their head: and paint out in aged wrinckles their youth foreſpent: who finally in preſence of many nephews are trimmed like trembling girles.

Let the Chriſtian woman bluſh, if ſhee force the comelineſſe of nature, if ſhe make prouiſion for the fleſh vnto concupiſcence, in which according to the Apoſtle, whoſoeuer are delighted, cannot pleaſe God. Our widow before was very carefully dreſſed: and all the

the day at the glasse she studied what might be amisse. Now she confidently saith: but we beholding the glory of our lord with face reuealed, are transformed into the same image, from glory vnto glory, as of our Lords spirit. Then the maides did platte her hayre, and the harmeles head was wringed with frizeled tops: but now the vntrimmed head knoweth this to suffice, that it is couered.

Then did the very softnes of feathers seeme hard, and she could scarce lay in

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the rayſed bedds: now ſhe riſeth betimes for to pray, and with her ſhrill voice preuenting the others, in ſinging *Alleluia*, ſhe is the firſt which beginneth to prayſe her Lord. She kneeleth vpon the bare ground, and with often teares that face is purged, which before was defiled with painting. After prayer, there are ſung pſalmes: & the feeble neck, and wearyed knees, & ſleepy eyes, for the earneſt feruour of the mind, can ſcant obtain any reſt. The mourning gowne is leaſt fouled,

when

when ſhe lyeth on the ground. The courſe pantoffle affoardeth the price of gilt ſhoes vnto the poore: the girdle is not beſet with gold & pretious ſtones, but of wollen, and moſt pure, becauſe of the ſimplicity, & ſuch as may rather ſtraiten the garments, then adorne them.

If the Scorpion enuyeth ſo good a purpoſe, and with flattering ſpeach perſwade againe to eate of the forbidden tree; inſteed of a ſhoe, let him be cruſhed with a curſe; & whileſt he

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dyeth in his poyson let him haue this answere: Go after me Satan: which is as much to say, as Aduersary; for he is the Aduersary of Christ, and an Antichrist, whosoeuer is displeased with the precepts of Christ.

I pray you, what haue we done likevnto the Apostles, that they are so offended? They forsake their aged Father with their ship and nets: the Publican riseth from the custom-house & followeth our Sauiour: The disciple which desired to returne home, and bidd his

friends farewell, is forbidden by our Maiſters voice. The buriall of a Father is not allowed, & it is a kind of piety, for our Lord to be voyd of pitty. We, becauſe we goe not in ſilkes, are eſteemed Monks, becauſe we are not drunke, neither open our mouthes vnto diſſolute laughter, we are calcalled graue and melancholy. If our coate be not gorgeous, we ſtraight heare that common Prouerbe: He is an hypocrite, and deceauing Grecian.

Let them vſe euen yet

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more rude scoffes; and carry about with them men stuffed with fat paunches. Our *Blesilla* will laugh, and not disdaine to hear the reproaches of croking frogges, whereas her Lord & Maister was called *Beelzebub*.

Hitherto S. *Hierome*. And there might be heer set downe many of his Epistls of the same subiect in praise and commendation of the Crowne and Merit of Widdowhood, if this litle treatise were capable therof, or that it were our intention to make heereof a great volume.

lume. And therfore we wil content our selues at this tyme with some briefe Aduertisementes of his, concerning the same subiect.

CHAP. V.

Aduertisementes to VViddowes, out of the same S. Hierome

MANY are the Instructions & documents, which the ancient Fathers, haue set down for vertuous & deuout Widdowes. And first of all we will produce what we find written by S. *Hierome* aforesayd in diuers places of his works, in the

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briefeſt manner we can, not to ouerweary the Widdow-Reader.

As thoſe Widdowes (ſayth S. *Hierome*) who whē they were marryed, did only ſtudy to pleaſe their huſbands: ſo let thoſe, who are now freed from carnal marriage, ſeeke and ſtudy only to pleaſe God, whome they haue choſen for their ſpouſe in place of their former huſbands.

As Widdowes whileſt they were ioyned to the world, did vſe the vanity of the world: ſo let them now being

being ioyned to god, baniſh from their hartes all vanityes.

As Widdowes, whileſt they were marryed in the world, ſtudyed how to nouriſh and pamper their bodyes, for the bearing of children, & ſupporting the burden of Marriage; ſo now let them keep ſobriety, and bring their body into ſeruitude, and ſubiect the ſame to the ſpirit, thereby to be able to ſerue their ſecond ſpouſe Chriſt Ieſus, in their ſacred and ſpirituall Marriage.

Let

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Let a Widdow be so much the more a louer of Chastity; by how much all her actions, wordes, and workes, may sauour of purity.

Let her neuer be alone, as neere as possible, with any man, that she need not be ashamed, whensoeuer she is seen to conuerse with another.

Let her alwayes auoyd the cõpany of vaine, idle, and sensuall persons; especially of Widdows that should be so giuen: nor so much as permit any such to come

come neere vnto her.

Let her take great heed neuer to detract, or murmure, or ſpeake euill of any man. Let her alſo auoyd thoſe who vſe to murmure, and permit them not vpon any occaſion to ſpeake euill of any perſon in her preſence, to the end that thoſe who viſit her, may be edifyed by her vertuous comportment.

She muſt alſo haue a great care of her honeſty and reputation, of which ſhe ought to be alwayes ſo icalous, and fearefull, that her

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her speach, her face, and all the actions of her body, yea her very garments may demonstrate the same; to the end that no occasion be giuẽ to others, not so much as to thinke the contrary of her.

By how much more younge she is; by so much the more ought she to be graue, and venerable in all her actions.

Let her not take too much pleasure, or delight in singing, especially of songs; but let her recreate her selfe honestly with those of her owne

owne house and family.

Let her alwayes haue at hand, some book of deuotion; & let her haue often recourse vnto prayer, which is the readiest way to driue away all vayne and euill thoughts, which the Enemy may put into her mind.

And for that, the flesh hath continually combat with the spirit, let her vse abstinence, and other mortifications, to subdue the same, according to the coũsell of her prudent Ghostly Father.

As Anger and Choller is

A a natu-

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naturall oftentymes to a man: so neuer to be ouercome therwith is most proper to a Christian. Let the widdow therfore take great heed therof.

Let her alwayes haue before her eyes the examples of *Iudith*, and *Anne* the Propheteſſe, widdowes, who continually night and day imployed their tyme in prayer, fasting, and vertuous exercises. For which God gaue to one of them so much grace and valour, as to ouercome and cut off the Diuels head, figured in that

of

of *Holofernes*; and to the other, to be the firſt widdow who ſhould imbrace, and receaue the Sauiour of the world in her armes, and thereby made partaker of diuers diuine ſecrets.

Let her conſider that her ſoule, is the daughter of God, & therfore ſhe ought not to vſe any ſtrang or fantaſtical ornaments to adorn her body; but let all her ſtudy and care be to adorne her ſoule, as it becommeth the daughter of God,

She muſt not content her ſelfe to haue begon any

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thing well, but she must study how to end it well: although *S. Paul* began to do euill, and ended with good; and *Iudas* contrariwise began to do well, but ended in euill.

To what purpose should there be colours & vernice vsed, to paint the face of a Christian? Such an ornament of the body becommeth not one, that serueth Christ, but rather one who serueth Antichrist. And if any looke towardes heauen with such a face, Christ wil not know them, since they haue

haue changed that shape which he gaue them.

Why do we promise one thing, and do another? And why doth the tongue prayse Chastity, & the body exercise Impurity?

It is a very great vertue, & worthy to be sought after with great diligence, care, and watchfullnes, to wit, to be born in the flesh, & not to liue according to the flesh.

If S. Paul feared, saying: *I doe not the good that I would, and therefore I do bring my body into seruitude.* Which

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of vs is there, who can be assured in this case?

If *Dauid* and *Salomon*, the familiar friendes of God, haue beene ouercome, by the temptations of their flesh: who is he, that will not feare to fall, walking vpon so slippery an yce?

Let a widdow continually thinke of doing seriously the will of God, that she may be worthy often to heare that saying of our Sauiour in the Ghospell: *Not those who say lord, lord, shall enter into the kingdome of heauen, but those who shall doe the will of my*

Father

Father which is in heauen. And that also which he sayd in another place: *VVhy do yee cal me Lord and Maister, and do not the thinges I command you to do?* And againe: *He that doth the will of my Father, is my brother, my sister, and my Mother*.

Moreouer God sayth by his Prophet: *The Sonne honours the Father, and the seruant the Maister: But I am your Father, and where is my honour? I am your Maister, and where is my seruice?* Wherby it is manifest that whosoeuer doth not the will of God, nor loues him as a Father, nor

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serues and feares him as a Lord and Maister, is (as holy *Dauid* sayth) for that he is a sinner, & hath done euil.

Labour, that thou mayst be rich: but so, as the poore may gaine thereby. And it wilbe most pleasing to God, if thou giue what thou canst possibly spare to the poore.

VVhensoeuer a widdow takes her repast, let her thinke on the poore, if she be of ability; at least let her giue what she can, according to her riches, or pouerty. And let her also think

at

at this tyme, that by and by after ſhe muſt fall to her prayers, or read ſome good ſpirituall leſſon, or exerciſe her ſelfe about ſome other deuout and pious worke.

VVhileſt a Widdow hath meanes, let her make vnto her ſelfe friendes by Almes; that when the ſame is wanting, and all ſpent, they may receaue her into the euerlaſting tabernacles.

Giue vnto all thoſe that ſhall demand of you, if you be able, and ſpecially to thoſe who be good. Cloath the naked, feed the hungry

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gry, and visite the sicke.

Euery tyme that you stretch forth your hand, to giue to the poore, remember that it is Iesus Christ to whome you giue: and behold, how your sweet lord, and Sauiour beggeth, to lay vp riches for you, against you haue need.

Think often that within a short tyme, you are to dye, and leaue this world; and so, you shall haue little list to thinke of a second worldly marriage.

Carry your selfe so, in the gouernement of your house

houſe and family, that all may acknowledge you for their Miſtreſſe; and alſo reuerence you for your holy and vertuous life.

Fly all ſorts of perſons, that haue any ſuſpitiõ of an euil name; it is not inough to ſay, *My Conſcience is cleer, I care not what others ſay of me*: but take you away all occaſion from others of thinking ill, wherby God may be in any ſort offended.

Seeke firſt of all the kingdome of heauẽ purely, and all other thinges neceſſary ſhall be giuen vnto you aboun-

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aboundantly.

A VViddow ought to flye all inordinate delights of the sense of Tasting: and for this cause, God would not haue hony to be burnt in his honor in the church, but oyle, which comes from the bitter Oliue-tree, and is of an vnpleasant tast.

S. *Paul* did chastise and afflict his body diuersly, that he might not become reprobate. And who will warrant a young widdow for her Chastity, if she continually fill her belly with variety of delicate viands?

It

It is not possible, that any one now adayes should be exempted frō the obliquy of mens tongnes, since it is become, as it were, a kind of pastime among the bad, to speake euill of the good: but a false bruite is soone past; and this present life of ours, doth giue vs witnesse of our life past. If any speake ill of thee, amend thy fault, and the rumour will quickly cease.

Nobility, Beauty, yong Age and Riches, make widdowes amiable vnto euery one; And how many more

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enemyes they haue to fight againſt, for the conſeruation of their Chaſtity; ſo much more great ſhall be their reward and recompence, if they mãfully reſiſt and ouercome.

Fly the company of thoſe widdowes, who are widdowes not in will, but of a kind of neceſſity; as alſo thoſe who liue in ſuch ſort, that they may ſeeme not to haue loſt their husbands.

God did not ſend a widdow riches to be idle, or to ſpend the ſame vnthriftily, but rather to the end ſhe might

might labour the more, eſpecially with her owne hands, and to haue dayly ſomthing to giue therof to the poore.

Haue continually before your eyes, and in your memory, this ſentence: *That which you would haue to be done vnto your ſelues, do you the ſame vnto another.*

Do not eaſily beleeue euill of another, for this is the property of a light & giddy mind, which for this reaſon is ſeldome in quiet.

Do not regard that which another prayſeth in thee;

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but weigh and ponder the ſame well with thy ſelfe, & in thy owne conſcience.

Speake little, and not without neceſſity, & thou ſhalt auoyde a number of ſinnes and imperfections.

Eſteeme nothing more amiable, or precious, then Humility which is the keeper & guardian of all other vertues. And know, that ther is nothing which makes thee more regarded of God and men, then Humility, our ſweet Sauiour ſaying: *In whome shall I repoſe or reſt, but in the humble?*

This

This Humility must not be exteriourly faygned, nor in wordes only; but truly perfect, and in the hart: for the Pride, which is turned into Humility, is extreme deformed: and the vices with are couered ouer with the veyle of Vertue, are insupportable, & odious in the sight of God.

Do not preferre thy self, before another, eyther for that thou art Noble, Rich, or Fayre, or for any other exteriour ornament of thy body: but rather esteeme thy selfe the more base and

abiect, therby to be truly greater in the ſight of God. For we are all borne of the ſame parents *Adam* & *Euen*, and all redeemed with the ſelfe ſame bloud of Ieſus Chriſt.

Do not regard the conditions of perſons, but their affections: for their mãners and carriage make them as well baſe, as noble. It is true liberty, and noblenes indeed, according to God, not to be a ſlaue to ſinne. Who hath byn more famous or illuſtrious then *S. Peter*, who was cuẽ but a poore Fiſherman?

man? Who among women hath been more noble then the B. Virgin, who was neuertheleſſe eſpouſed but to a poore Carpenter? To this Fiſherman, God notwithſtanding giue the keyes of Heauen: and this humble Virgin was made worthy to be the Mother of God himſelfe, and her ſpouſe *S. Ioſeph* his Foſter-Father.

Haue ſome conuenient & retyred place in thy houſe whither thou maiſt repayre often to talke & trait with God alone, as well about that which belongeth to

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thy ſelfe, as to thy family.

Content thy ſelfe to haue loſt the firſt degree of Virginity; & that by the third, thou art come to the ſecõd: to wit, that by the endeauour of marriage, thou art come to the continency of Widdow-hood.

Many women whilſt their huſbands are aliue, make vowes of Chaſtity & are continent. And ſhall not others who are freed from their huſbands, and are become widdowes, much ſooner performe the ſame?

God gaue thee a husbād, and

and God hath taken him from thee againe, & therby made thee free from the seruitude of men. Do thou therfore réder him due thákes by thy chast and vertuous liuing in widdowhood

Let the yong widdow, who cannot (or rather will not) liue chast, rather take a husband, then the diuell.

Yow know by experience how many troubles cares & anguishes of mynd marryage drawes with it: Now that you haue vomited vp al the bitternesse therof, wherfore will you be againe caught

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caught with the same? The byrd, that hath once had her foot in the limetwigs, wil take heed for comming there againe, I trow.

Make a Vertue of Necessity: and leaue not a thing certaine, for an vncertayne if you be wise.

Take heed of the cõsells of your Nurse, and others of your house and family, for that they do alwayes set before your eyes somthing that may please yow, and that may turne to their owne profit & cõmodity.

If

If in doing well your Father, or carnal friends be heauy and grieued, your Spouſe Chriſt Ieſus will reioyce: And if your family weepe, the Angells will ſinge.

You do not ſo much belong to thoſe of whom you were borne, as to him of whome yow were regenerat, & borne a new; redeemed by his pretious bloud and death.

Let the yong Widdow, if her ſtomacke be weake, vſe a little wyne; but let her take heed of meates that be hoate

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hoat of nature.

A Heathen women once ſaid, *He that had my firſt loue, was my huſband: and he that hath takē it away, let him keep it with him ſtill in his graue.* If an Infidell did ſo much diſpraiſe and diſlike a ſecond marriage: what ſhall be expected that a Chriſtian widdow ſhould do?

All theſe ſayings are of good old S. *Hierome*: in gathering wherof I haue byn the longer, for that I hope they wil be pleaſing & cōfortable to widdows. Now let vs ſee a little what S. *Auguſtine*

guſtine will ſay vnto vs, concerning the ſame ſubiect.

CHAP. VI.

Documents for VViddowes, out of S. Auguſtine.

THE widdow that hath Children, ought to bring them vp, and inſtruct them in the feare of God. And this muſt be her principall care. Neither ought ſhe ſo much to glory that ſhe hath children, as that ſhe hath indeed good and vertuous children.

If ſhe reſolue to keep her

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dowhood, let her giue thankes to good, who hath by his holy inſpiration, put this reſolution into her hart, & let her in all things praiſe his holy Name.

Let her not deſpiſe thoſe who haue not the intentiõ to remayne widdowes: but let her know, that it is a ſpeciall gift of God; and that he giues it to whome he pleaſeth, and in diuers manners.

Let her imploy as much tyme to pleaſe and ſeruе God, as ſhe hath done to pleaſe and ſeruе her huſ-

band:

band: and by how much the more ſhe ſhall pleaſe him, by ſo much more ſhall ſhe be happy.

Let her ſeeke to pleaſe God with the beauty of her ſoule, as ſhe hath done before to pleaſe the world with the beauty of her body: to wit, with her humility, chaſtity, wiſedome, loue &c.

In place of carnall & worldly pleaſures, let there ſucceed ſpirituall, to wit, prayer, reading, good thoughtes, good workes, frequēting the Sacraments,

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hope of eternall life, eleuation of the mind to God, & continual giuing of thanks to his diuin Maieſty. Theſe and the like are the true delights and pleaſurs of a true and vertuous Widdow.

Let her haue a ſpeciall care, that the loue of riches, and Honours ſucceed not in place of the loue of her husband. For many haue there beene who haue vanquiſhed and ouercome the laſciuious wantonnes of the fleſh, and yet haue been themſelues ouercome with couetouſnes: and haue loued

ued riches ſo much the more diſordinatly, by how much they haue repreſſed the cõcupiſcence, & deſires of the fleſh.

Let her exerciſe her ſelfe in all true vertue, as well in her young age as in her old; & as much as her health and ableneſſe of body will permit.

When ſhe loues God with her whole hart, all kind of labour and toyle ſeemes ſweet and light. And if it ſeeme pleaſant vnto a hũter, to follow a wild and ſauage beaſt, with ſo

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great labour, toyle, yea and danger of his life, to take him: what should it seeme vnto a soule inflamed with loue, to take paynes for the getting of God himselfe?

Let not a Widdow, though neuer so rich, noble, fayre, yea and though she haue neuer so fayre an issue of children, for this cause reioyce; but accompt her selfe as one desolate in this world, not relying vpon any other consolation, but wholy vpon God; esteeming her selfe but as a pilgrime vpon earth, banished into

into this world from her heauenly Countrey, & ſubiect to many perils, and miſeryes, a great way diſtant from eternall happynes, & moſt vncertaine euer to attaine therunto: And therfore let her lament with King *Dauid*, & *S Paul*, who had the like thoughts and cogitations.

If ſhe do abound in riches, yet let her not ſet her affection thereon. And aboue all things, let her contemne couetouſnes and auarice, the holy Scripture ſaying: *There is nothing more*

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perniciou then couetousnes, nothing more wicked then the loue of money; since that for money the Couetous man will sel his own soule. And the Apostle sayth: *That couetousnes is the roote of all euil.* Our Sauiour also in the Ghospell telleth vs. *How hard a thing it is for those that be rich to enter into the kingdome of heauen: And that a Camell, shall ẽter more easily through a needle, then a rich man into the Kingdom of heauen.* By riches are vnderstood all earthly things, and goods, disordinatly affected, or sought after.

When

When a widdow hath done her deuotions, let her neuer be idle; let her take in her hand either wooll, or flaxe, let her card, let her ſpinne, let her wind the yarn that others haue ſpon, let her twiſt it, let her ſee there be no fault in the worke, and if there be any let her mend it, & do what is neceſſary. Being thus continually occupyed, the longeſt dayes will ſeem very ſhort & pleaſant: *For the ſoule that is idle is full of bad deſires*, as the holy Scripture inſinuateth. And nothing can

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can be so pretious in the sight of God, as to giue to the poore the labour of her owne handes.

Let a VViddow take heed of adorning or attyring her head with pearles, Iewells, or pretious carcanets, nor vse frizeled hayre; for these be the true signs of hell-fire: but let her seeke another sorte of pretious stones, and weare them, to wit, Humility, Feare of God, and other vertues; to the end, she may buy therwith that inestimable pearle & margarite, Christ Iesus

Iesus the spouse of the soule.

Finally let a Widdow vse discretion, maturity, & prudence in all her actions: let her consider who she is, & who he is to whome she hath consecrated her Widdowhood; to the end she may obtaine his earthly benediction for her selfe, and her children in this world, & life eternall in the next.

CHAP. VII.

Diuers memorable Examples of true VViddowhood.

VVE haue spoken already of the Famous

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mous and glorious Widdowes *Iudith*, and *Anne* the Propheteſſe, before the cõming of Chriſt. Let vs now ſet downe ſome other examples. And firſt of all occurs that moſt noble and illuſtrious Roman Widdow *Paula*, of whom *S. Hierome* writeth, That ſo ſoone as her husband was dead, contemning the pompes & pleaſurs of the world, euen in the middeſt of ſo great wealth and aboundance of riches, choſe the ſtate of perpetuall Continency in widowhood.

Bleſilla

Blesilla likewise renowned for her beauty, wealth, and honour, her husband desceasing, & she being left a young and noble Lady, chose the holy State of widowhood, by which she became renowned to al posterity.

Melania was no lesse prayse-worthy, who when her husband being dead, & not as yet buryed, she caused the bodyes of two of her sonnes (of very great hope and expectation, a little before also desceased) to be brought vnto her husbands

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body, where after extreme weeping, ſighing, & drowninge of her ſelfe almoſt in teares, and euen loathing as it were marriage for the cares, troubles, & torments that it bringes, without any longer deliberation, conſecrated her ſelfe vnto God, by vowing perpetuall Widdowhood.

Euſraſia likewiſe a Roman Lady is not inferiour to the aboue named, whoſe husband dying, ſhe being in her young & flouriſhing age, fayre, noble, rich, contemned a ſecond marriage, wher-

wherūto [illegible] was sollicited by the Emperour himselfe. And so dimissing her seruants and retinew, retyred her selfe into *Thebais*, where she liued most Saintly in perpetuall widdowhood.

The same did *Elizabeth* daughter to the King of *Hungary*, who being depriued of her Lord and Husband, presently contemned the pleasures of the Court, and vanityes of the world, giuing her selfe wholy to the seruice of poore, sicke, & needy people; not enduring that any man besides Iesus

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Christ, should be called
her Spouse, which she truly
acknowledged in the poor.
The noble and most
worthy example of *Constantia* daughter to *Costantine* the
Great, Emperour, is admirable: who whilest her husband was yet liuing, deserued to receaue the crowne
and merit of Continency.
For that her Father the
Emperour marrying her to
Halicarnus Captaine of the
Roman Army, she first perswaded him to be a Christian, afterward to giue ouer
the warres, to lay aside his
purple,

purple, and finally for the loue of Iesus Christ, to vow perpetuall Chastity.

The same did *Chunegundis* wife to *Henry* the Emperour, who perswaded him also to liue in perpetuall Chastity, as she had vowed to do; whereby they both became Saintes of Gods Church, renowned to all posterity.

Neither must we passe ouer in silence the most worthy and noble example of *Galla* daughter to *Simmachus* a Consul of *Rome*, whose husband deceasing, and she

left a yong and beautifull widdow, was so assayled with infirmityes, that her body became ful of botches and soares. She consulted with her Doctours, who all agreed, that if she would be cured, she must marry againe. Whose counsell she so much disliked, that she sayd, She would rather endure the same all the dayes of her life, yea death it self, then marry againe: which purpose she truly obserued most Saintly in holy Widdowhood to her dying-day.

Amia also another Roman Lady, and widdow of great worth and nobility, yong, & fayre, her husband being dead, which he had enioyed but a small while, was earnestly sollicited by her friends to a second marriage, which she vterly refused. Being by them demaunded the cause why, she said. If (quoth she) I should marry again, & find a good hubād like to my former, I should liue continually in feare to loose him by death: and least I should chāce to light vpon a bad husband, I will

not aduenture vpon such a disgrace. An act and purpose surely wise, and graue, worthy to be considered attentiuely by widdowes, that desyre to liue out of danger.

As nobly and prudently did *Olimpia* of *Constantinople*, discipleof *S. Iohn Chrysostome*, and the widdow of *Nebridius* Prefect of the Army, a man of most noble Renowne, who hauing byn married but twenty moneths only, was exhorted by *Theodosius* the Emperour to marry againe, since she was

was both yong, fayre, noble, rich, learned, and held of euer one for a virgin. She made this Anſwere. If my Lord the Emperour (quoth ſhe) would haue me to marry againe, why did he ſo ſoone depriue me of my husband (for he was ſlayne in the Emperours warres) who was ſo agreable to my nature, and myne to his? But becauſe his Highneſſe knows me to be vnfit for a marryed Eſtate, it ſeemes he hath quickly deliuered me from that ſeruitude: and made me print in my hart

the

the delight of Continency in widdowhood.

And let no man meruaile that the continency of widdowhood is so much recõmended to Christian women, seing that among the Gentills, specially the old *Romans*, the same was so greatly honoured, that when a widdow died, her head was adorned with a Crowne of Continency, and to caryed in solemne triumph to her graue.

The said Romans did also attribute another honour to the Continency of wid-

Widdowhood, which was, That on the wedding day, there were no women ſuffered to come neere, much leſſe to touch the Bride, but only ſuch as had beene the wiues of one husband, to wit, ſuch as had beene but once marryed; cõmanding all that had beene twice marryed (yea though they were Widdowes) to keep aloofe of, as prophane, impure, and fortelling of an euill fortune to the happynes of marriage.

They did moreouer accompt it a ſigne of great intempe-

temperance in any woman, to marry more then once. And for this cause one *Portia* a Noble Lady being in cõpany of other Matrons and Dames vpon a tyme; & vnderstanding that one of thẽ had beene twice marryed, sayd vnto her: *Madame, The happy, and chast woman neuer marryes but once*. A saying worthy of a most prudent and wise Lady. And conforme to this was that most laudable fact of *Cornelia*, daughter to *Africanus* & wife to *Tyberius Gracchus*, who when her husband was deceased

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ſeaſed, refuſed a ſecond Marriage with King *Ptolomey*, accompting it an act of too great Intemperance ſo to do.

And of no leſſe praiſe & commendation was Continency in Widdow-hood, held amongſt the ancient Iewes, in the old Teſtamẽt wherof before we haue ſet downe the Examples of *Iudith* & *Anne* the Propheteſſe, and ſo needleſſe to be heere againe repeated.

The chaſt Continency alſo of that holy and vertuous Widdow of *Sarepta*, is

not vnknowne, to whome *Meale* & *Oyle* neuer wanted during the tyme of that great famine, till by gods commandement it rayned againe vpon the dry and withered earth, wherby the same became so moist and fertile, as it filled the Countreys round about with all aboundance.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the works of Mercy, Deuotion, Courage, and Conſtancy of widdowes. And of the Mantle, and the Ring.

AMONGST many, this is not the leaſt, nor laſt pious Conſideration, that in all Countreyes of Chriſtendome, the noble workes and monumẽts of widdowes are yet extãt. Nor ſhall we need at this tyme to trauaile out of our owne Iland of *England*, to view the ſame.

For it is well knowne,

that ther is scarse any Citty, Towne, yea or Borrough thoughout all England, without some monument or other, of pious widdowes.

For how many goodly Hospitalls, Almes-houses Free-schooles, yea some famous Churches also haue you seene built, and endowed with sufficient rents, & reuenews by widdowes? How many High-wayes, Bridges, Wels, Crosses, haue byn made, and exected by pious Widdowes, for the increase of deuotion in the people

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people, and for the good of their owne ſoules?

What Prayers, I pray you, what Mortifications, Tẽperance, Night-watchinges giuing of almes, haue the deuout Widdowes of our Countrey in former tymes (and now a dayes very many alſo, but yet not comparable to the former) exerciſed, for the loue of God; taking a true delight therin in their moſt Chaſt Widdow-hood, to ſerue their ſpouſe Chriſt Ieſus, whome they had choſen inſteed of their deceaſed huſbands?

How many of prime Nobility haue we had, in our Countrey, that haue contemned ſecond marriages? And if we ſhould recount all, we ſhould perhaps ſurpaſſe the greateſt part of Chriſtendome baſides, in that kind: ſome entring into Religion and becomming Nunnes, yea great Saints alſo; & others exerciſing workes of Mercy at home among the poore, to the great comfort of the diſtreſſed.

And to begin with Queenes, how many I pray you

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you, haue we had in our little Iland, that after the death of their Lords, haue set aside all pompe and vanity of the world, vtterly refusing a second marriage, and haue either voluntarily shut themselues vp in Cloisters, there to spend their dayes in prayer and contemplation with God; or els haue retyred to some priuate place, continually exercising themselues in deuotion and meditation of heauenly thinges.

Before the Conquest our Iland was more fertile in

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this kind, as being neerer to their primitiue feruour, & that in few ages, thē it hath byn euer since. For within the compasse of 500. yeares, there haue byn aboue thirty Queenes, that our Histories do make mention of, to haue made themselues eyther Nuns in Monasteries as is aboue said, or els haue liued priuatly at home, continuinge in their Chaste widdowhood to their dying day.

Of the bloud Royall, and other Noble familyes, the number is far greater; neyther

neyther will it be to our purpoſe in this place to recount them all. Only this I note, that the greateſt part of the forſaid Queens (beſides others of noble families) were many ages ago accoũted Saints, & for ſuch acknowledged throughout Chriſtendome; and many Churches, Altars, and Monuments of ſanctity erected in their honour, and their very Names famous to all Poſterity. For to omit *S. Helen* the Empreſſe, a Britiſh Widdow, and Mother to *Conſtantine* the great the firſt Chriſtian

Christian Emperour, we haue S. *Ermenild* & S. *Ermenburge* Queenes of *Mercia*, or middle Englishmē; S. *Algiue* mother, and S. *VVilfride* wife to king *Edgar* the first Monarch of England; S. *Edilburge*, & S. *Ethelwide* Queenes of the *VVestsaxons*; S. *Eadgith*, S. *Ethelburge*, S. *Chineburge*, S. *Ealflede*, S. *Audry* Queenes of *Northumberland*; S. *Osith* Queene of the *Eastsaxons*; S. *Sexburg* Queen of *Kent*; S. *Hereswide* Q. of the *Eastangles*; S. *Agatha*, widdow of Prince *Edward* surnamed the Outlaw; S. *Margaret* Queene of *Scol-*

land

land, *Maude* the Empresse &c.

All these, and very many others, were most eminent in piety & deuotion, both in their widdowhood, and continẽcy: yea some of thẽ vowed chastity their Lords and Husbands yet liuing, as *S. Edilburge* Queen of the *VVestsaxons*, & *S. Audry* Queen of *Northumberland*; at whose bodyes and reliques it hath pleased God to shew wonderous signes, and worke many Miracles to testify the same; wherby they haue byn euer since, and still are honoured

honoured for Saints thoroughout the world.

It was an ancient custome in our Iland (and the same continueth in some parts of *Germany* vntill this day) that in tyme of warre, plagues, famyne, or of any publicke necessity, there were in many Cities and Townes a certaine number of widdowes ordayned to watch & pray continually, night and day, in the Churches, by their turnes or courses, one or more togeather: because it was held, that their prayers were of more

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more efficacy, and power with Almighty God, to aſſwage his wrath, then the prayers of other common people, as perſons dedicated wholy to his ſeruice, by the obſeruation of Continency, in their Chaſte, and Holy widdowhood.

Neyther is the true Valour and Conſtancy of deuout Widdowes, in our Countrey, leſſe to be praiſed and admired; ſince in that kind alſo we haue gone beyond many other Nations, eſpecialy in theſe later days, when as their noble and

heriocall Examples heerof haue made them famous to posterity; whether we respect their courage & constãcy in suffering both losse of goods & imprisonment for their faith and religion, as glorious Confessours; or els the sheeding of their bloud in testimony of the same, as triũphant Martyrs.

For vpon some of these widdowes hath God bestowed an inuincible courage and fortitude, ioyned with an admirable patiẽce in suffering for the Catholike Cause, not only imprisonment

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priſonmēt of their bodyes, but loſſe alſo of goodes and fortunes, to their wholy yndoing in their temporall eſtates in this world, that they might receaue a more plentifull reward and merit in the world to come. And what Catholike in England is there, that cannot witneſſe the ſame ſufficiently?

Vpon others, hath ſweet Ieſus, of his infinite loue, and ſuperabundant Charity beſtowed a more high and ſupereminent gift, not only in ſuffering, as is afor-

said, losse of goods & liberty in this life; but also to seale the same with their deareſt bloud, for his Names sake, Honour, Faith, and Religion. And this not vpon the meaneſt sort, but euen vpon some of the Bloud Royall of *England*; as is well knowne in the Lady *Margaret Plãtagenet* widdow, Coũteſſe of *Salisbury*, and daughter to the Duke of *Clarẽce*, in time of K. *Henry* the 8. & in the Soueraign Lady Q. *Mary* of *Scotland*, Widdow, and mother to our Soueraigne that now raigneth; vpon the

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the deuout widdowes alſo Mrs. *Marg. Clitherow* at *Yorke*, Mrs. *Anne Lyne* at *London*, & others, in the late raigne of Q. Elizabeth: All giuing their liues for the conſtant profeſſion & defence of the Catholike Faith, & therby made worthy of a crown of a Martyrdom, in their holy widdowhood.

Of the Mantle, & the Ring.

IT was alſo an ancient cuſtome in England, (which I haue not read to haue byn practiſed in other Coũtreyes) for widdowes

to weare a proper, and peculiar vpper garmẽt, called a *Mantle*, by which they were knowne, and distinguished from other people.

This *Mantle* was a lõg, loose Garment, which couered them all ouer, & did touch the ground, made of blacke cloath ordinarily, though others, who were more noble, vsed them of stuff, yet alwayes black; signifying thereby that they wer be accounted as dead to the world, & to spẽd the rest of their days in mourning for their own sins, & the sinnes of

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of others, for whō of their Charity they did pray.

It seemes that this custome was in vse in our Iland long before the Conquest, aboue 900. yeares ago. And the first that I read of, to haue brought in the same, was S. *Theodore* Archb. of *Canterbury*, sent into Englād by Pope *Vitalian*, about the yeare 660. And a little after him againe, by *S. Adelmus* Bishop of *Sherborne* amōgst the *VVestsaxons*, who liued in the yeare of Christ 709. of whō it is recorded, that he gaue hallowed *Mantles* to diuers,

both Virgins & Widdowes who had vowed Virginity & Continency: after the taking wherof, it was not lawfull for them to marry, vnder payne of grieuous ſinne.

Afterwards, the ſame became more frequent, & was ordinarily vſed throughout Englād, euen vntil this laſt age of Schiſme & Hereſy in the ſame. At the receiuing wherof, were vſed diuers pious and godly Cerimonyes: to wit, that ſuch widdowes, as had for a certaine number of yeares, liued

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ded in Continency & widdowhood (after the death of their first husbãds only) & well proued themselues therein, receaued from the Bishop, a hallowed *Mantle*, kneeling before the high altar, in the Church, in tyme of solemne Masse; as also a Ring of Gold, or Siluer, made plaine and round, like to a wedding-Ring, which was also hallowed. And this Mantle was put about their neckes, by the Bishop himself, he pronouncing in the meane while, a short prayer; as also the ring vpõ the

their fourth finger, with a prayer likwise pronoūced by the Bishop. After which, receauing the Bishops blessing, was songe *Te Deum laudamus*, in thanksgiuing; & the widdow thus adorned (with a veyle also ouer her head) was led home to her house by two graue matrōs, and afterward held and reputed for a sacred person, al the dayes of her life.

Nor after this, was it lawfull for her euer to marry, or to fall from this her pious purpose, without a most grieuous syn, & other Ecclesiasticall

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Eccleasiſticall punithments ordayned for the ſame, hauing once receau'd that hallowed Robe, & Ring, as a pledge of her faith made to her Celeſtiall ſpouſe Chriſt Ieſus, by ſo publike and ſolemne a Cerimony of his Church

And we read, that about the tyme of K. Henry the firſt, a widdow was ſeuerly puniſhed by the Biſhop, for marrying, after ſhe had receaued the Mãtle & the Ring in the manner aboue ſayd. Wherby it ſeemeth, that the cuſtome was to make ſome

vow of perpetuall Continency to the Bishop, at the receauing therof; and therby became subiect to Ecclesiastial power, & punishment also, if she trangressed, or sacrilegiously violated the same.

FINIS.

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